

# *Elementary English*

CHRISTMAS BOOKS  
SELF-SELECTION IN READING  
RESEARCH IN SPELLING  
SEVENTH REPORT ON TV



ORGAN OF THE

NATIONAL

COUNCIL

OF

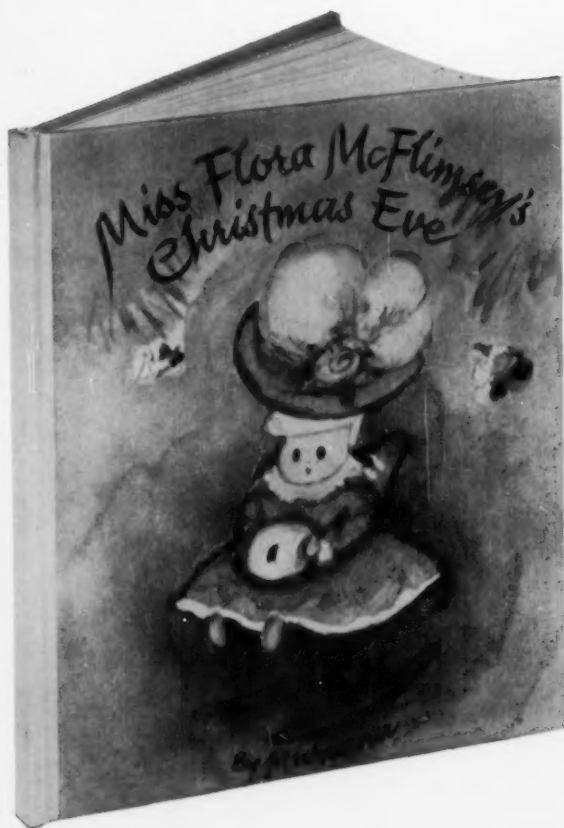
TEACHERS

OF

ENGLISH



DECEMBER  
1956



# Elementary ENGLISH

An official organ of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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### By Way of Introduction . . .

Few people in the United States are as widely read and as well-informed in the field of children's literature as LELAND B. JACOBS. He has been in great measure responsible for the success of our series of articles about the authors and illustrators of children's books. It is fitting that he should contribute his own survey of Christmas books this month.

MILDRED E. THOMPSON, who wrote the article on "Self-Selection," has taught every grade from first through eighth. For two years she has been consultant in reading for the El Monte Elementary School District, California, and lecturer in Elementary Education at the University of Southern California.

DR. CLARENCE WACHNER, director of language education in the Detroit public schools, discusses helpfully a subject which has attracted increasing attention in recent years. Everybody believes we should teach listening, but few people do anything about it. Dr. Wachner undertakes to show us the way.

Spoken language is probably the primary concern of teachers of English at all levels. LOIS V. JOHNSON shows how it may be improved in connection with the guidance of group discussion.

Spelling continues to pose a problem to English teachers everywhere. In this issue we present two articles on the subject, and we plan to give more space to it in subsequent issues. ARNIE E. RICHMOND, who is author of the first, is a former elementary school principal and now a sixth grade teacher in the Palm River School, Tampa, Florida. He has a master's degree from the University of Maryland. Edna Lou Furness, who contributes the second, is familiar to readers of this magazine. She has contributed many careful summaries of research on important topics, and promises to come again.

We welcome once more to our pages Mrs. CARRIE STEGALL, who discusses the phenomenal success of the Teen Age Book Club. Mrs. Stegall was in large measure responsible for bringing a large delegation from Texas to the St. Louis Council meeting.

LOUISE HOVDE MORTENSEN's store of ideas seems well-nigh inexhaustible. This month's contribution is one of her most interesting suggestions.

How valid and reliable are the readability formulas? JOHN DAWKINS, a graduate student at the University of Chicago, is skeptical. He has been a publisher's editor, and wonders whether the measurement techniques take all necessary factors into account. Edgar Dale and Jeanne Chall, authors of a famous readability formula, "Reply."

Television now visits a majority of American homes. This new medium is only a little more than five years old, so far as its mass impact on American culture is concerned. Its effect upon children is of the greatest interest to American educators. For this reason, *Elementary English* considers itself fortunate to present the seventh in PROFESSOR PAUL WITTY's annual surveys of children's reactions to television. A study of the entire series will trace the growth of this medium as one of the powerful educational forces operating in the life of the child.

*Elementary English* is most fortunate in having been able to attract the services of able, enthusiastic young people. Our readers have appreciated the excellent news and comment of Dr. William A. Jenkins in his department, "The Educational Scene." Now we present with pride the department of Paul Hazard dealing with the mass media. Jenkins calls attention in this issue to the article about him in *Variety*. We were privileged to talk with him at dinner in St. Louis. He promises to help us to make *Elementary English* effectively responsive to the new media in the area of the elementary language arts.

While on the subject of the mass media, we are glad to announce that we will soon publish the address of Dr. Helen Huns, delivered at the St. Louis Council meeting, on the use of a TV program in the elementary school classroom. Judging by the enthusiasm of her audience, we predict that this will be one of the most popular articles of the year.

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## Filmstrips

## Filmstrips

## Filmstrips

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# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

XXXIII

DECEMBER, 1956

No. 8

LELAND B. JACOBS

## Literature's Plums in the Christmas Pie

In the elementary school, for many children no holiday is more beloved than Christmas. From kindergarten through the later-elementary grades, the celebration of this holiday is eagerly anticipated by great numbers of American boys and girls. It is cherished as a joyful time.

The arts have much to contribute to the education of children at this redletter interlude in the school year. Surely the Christmas carols, as collected by Ruth Crawford Seeger in *American Folk Songs for Christmas* (Doubleday), by Inez Bertail in *Child's Book of Christmas Carols* (Random House), by Opal Wheeler in *Sing for Christmas* (E. P. Dutton & Co.), by Franz Wasner in *The Trapp Family's Book of Christmas Songs* (Pantheon), bring happy melody into the lives of youngsters who learn them at school. Surely the treasury of the world's art which has been inspired by the Christmas spirit enlarges children's interpreta-

tions of the meaning of this holiday. And just as surely literature can contribute to the delights of the days before Christmas and to the enrichment of children's lives permanently. Children's feelings for the spirit of Christmas can be touched through story and verse. They can, with literature's

gentle help, reach sympathetically out toward new values, higher aspirations for what Christmas can signify in their daily living.

As with all literature for children, the literature of Christmas has as its prime purpose enjoyment. But some books are cheap and tawdry entertainment—artificial, superficial, inartistic. The Christmas literature provided for children at school should be better than that: naturally

child-like in its content; genuine in its conception; artistic in its expression; deeply moving in its appeals. Christmas literature

Dr. Jacobs is Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.



Leland B. Jacobs

at its best is richly pervaded with honest sentiment, but free from the trappings of sentimentality. In some unique way the spirit of Christmas must have so captured the writer that he spontaneously conveys his holiday enthusiasm to his readers.

Each year it is a pleasant holiday experience for the teacher to discover new Christmas literature to share with the boys and girls whom he is teaching. Each year it is satisfying to a teacher to make available to children Christmas stories and poems and pictures that are shining coins in their Christmas purses of mind and memory.

What teacher can resist the jolly, gay, light-hearted stories that laugh their way into children's affections? Children in their first years in school would find it difficult to resist such rib-tickling stories as:

*Azor and the Blue-eyed Cow*, Maude Crowley. Oxford. Azor's stubborn belief in Santa Claus is vindicated with the help of an unpredictable cow.

*Lizbeth Ann's Goat*, Mary V. Provines. Viking. A persevering little girl wishes for a goat for Christmas—and gets it.

*Petunia's Christmas*, Roger Duvoisin. Knopf. A very funny goose, Petunia, and her Christmas doings.

*Plum Pudding for Christmas*, Virginia Kahl. Scribner's. The duchess and her thirteen daughters are preparing for the

holiday celebration at the castle. The king is coming, and he insists on plum pudding for dinner.

*The Christmas Forest*, Louise Fatio. Aladdin. The small animals of the forest keep faith with the children when Santa Claus unexpectedly goes to sleep.

*The Christmas Whale*, Roger Duvoisin. Knopf. When Santa's reindeer were unavailable, the whale helped Santa make his annual yule-tide rounds.

"Great Fun" stories for children in the later-elementary grades may be more robust or more subtle in their laugh-provoking qualities, but they are mighty appealing at holiday time:

*A Pint of Judgment*, Elizabeth Morrow. Macmillan. A small girl's generosity helps her to learn at Christmas time what "judgment" means.

*Kersti and St. Nicholas*, Hilda Van Stockum. Viking. A naughty young one has an unexpected Christmas.

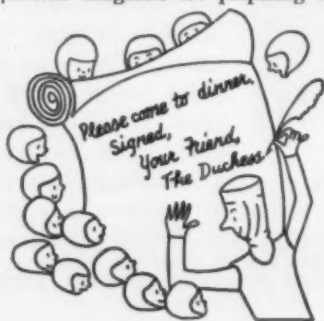
*The Dog Who Spoke to Santa Claus*, Katherine Forbes. McKay. An old Southern hound truly makes Christmas a magical time.

*The Four Friends*, Eleanor Hoffman. Macmillan. A pig, a parrot, a hen, and a dog take an unusually adventurous automobile ride on Christmas Eve.

*Torten's Christmas Secret*, Maurice Dobbier. Little, Brown. A Christmas gnome, with humorous results, secretly helps children who are not truly "good."

Then, too, there are stories which find their focus in the real Christmas celebrations of American children and their families. For some children, these stories will confirm their own experiences. For others, some of these stories will extend their meanings of the celebration of this holiday in regions or households different from their own. If one teaches younger children, he will find such stories as the following from which to choose:

*A Christmas Story*, Mary Chalmers. Harper. Elizabeth's search for a star for her Christmas tree.



From *Plum Pudding for Christmas*

*Christmas—This Way!* Catherine Beebe. Oxford. The school children plan and prepare for Christmas.

*Cowbells for Forget-Me-Not*, Helen Condon. Nelson. Bells from Switzerland help make a farm family happy at holiday time. *Pedro, the Angel of Olvera Street*, Leo Politi. Scribner's. The story of a small boy's part in the Mexican Christmas celebration in Los Angeles.

*Snow before Christmas*, Tasha Tudor. Oxford. A little story of a whole family getting ready for an old-fashioned celebration.

*The Best Birthday*, Quail Hawkins. Doubleday. A small boy's Christmas is almost ruined by the birth of a baby sister.

*The Bird's Christmas Tree*, Emma L. Brock. Knopf. This little book lends encouragement to young children to create a holiday celebration for the birds.

*The Doll in the Window*, Pamela Bianco. Oxford. Victoria chooses gifts for others and gets one herself. Points up the struggle between giving and keeping.

*The Most Beautiful Tree in the World*, Grosset and Dunlap. Andy and Ellen's spruce tree becomes the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center.

*Winter Comes to Meadowbrook Farm*, Katherine S. Keeler. Nelson. City children spend the holidays on the farm.

If one teaches older children, these books about American Christmas celebrations are well worth looking into:

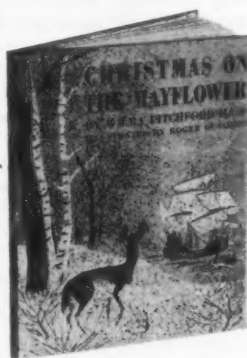
*A Cabin for the Mary Christmas*, Vera Amrein. Harcourt. Three children help build a cabin on a small sloop during Christmas vacation on Long Island.

*A Month of Christmases*, Siddle Joe Johnson. Longmans, Green. A Texas family keeps the holiday traditions in a heart-warming way.

*Ask Dr. Christmas*, Edith Dorian. Whittlesey. A doctor's family, due to the influence of many nationalities, celebrates the holiday in various traditions.

*Lucy's Christmas*, Anne Molloy. Houghton Mifflin. One Christmas in the Maine woods meant a great deal to Lucy and her family.

*Once in the Year*, Elizabeth Yates. Coward-McCann. The heart-warming story of young Peter's unusual Christmas Eve.



*Christmas on the Mayflower*, Wilma Pitchford Hays. Coward-McCann. An historical account of how the Pilgrim forefathers spent Christmas in 1620.

*Maggie Rose*, Ruth Sawyer. Viking. An industrious child in a shiftless but charming family got the birthday-Christmas celebration for which she had always longed. *Pinto's Journey*, Wilfred S. Bronson. Messner. A New Mexican Indian boy and his burro successfully overcome dangers to bring home the turquoise rock needed for jewelry making.

*Sleighbells for Windy Foot*, Frances M. Frost. Whittlesey. The Clark family on their New England farm enjoy their pony, Windy Foot, during the Christmas holidays.

*Snow over Bethlehem*, Katherine Milhous. Scribner's. How the children of the Moravian settlement at Nazareth, Pennsylvania, were sent to near-by Bethlehem for protection against Indians.

*The Beasiest Boy*, Jesse Stuart. Whittlesey. A Kentucky boy's struggle to earn money for the most important thing in his life—a Christmas present for his grandmother.

*The Best Christmas*, Lee Kingman. Doubleday. A humble family makes the most of the true Christmas spirit.

*The Bird's Christmas Carol*, Kate Douglas Wiggin. Houghton Mifflin. A fragile girl demonstrates the true spirit of Christmas.

*The Light at Tern Rock*, Julia Sauer. Viking. A boy spends an unforgettable Christmas at a remote lighthouse.

*The Long Christmas Eve*, Elizabeth Dur-yea. Houghton Mifflin. Boston's Beacon Hill at holiday time.

*The Magic Christmas Tree*, Lee Kingman. Farrar. Two girls each lay claim to a small pine, but after some trouble discover they can share the tree.

*The Trees Kneel at Christmas*, Maud Hart Lovelace. Crowell. A girl's will to believe creates a Christmas miracle in Brooklyn. *Tor and Azor*, Maude Crowley. Oxford. Tor is visiting in America for the first time. Somewhat lonely, he finds Azor's friendship reassuring. Azor's part in helping Tor celebrate a real Norwegian Christmas climaxes the boy's friendship.

*With Bells On*, Katherine Milhous. Scribner's. A fine feeling is developed for preparations for Christmas, and its celebration, in Pennsylvania in the Conestoga wagon days.

Some realistic stories of how boys and girls in various parts of this wide world participate in Christmas festivities have appeared. These stories, at their best, help children to sense appreciatively what it is like to live as a child in another culture at holiday time. They are like ribbons of faith and good will which extend from the American classroom out across national boundaries into foreign homes and communities that also are seeking to keep alive the spiritual quality of the yule-tide. Examples of stories that five-to-seven-year olds comprehend quite well are these:

*Christmas at Timothy*, Elsie M. Harris. Nelson. How Christmas is kept in present-day England.

*Hansi*, Ludwig Bemelmans. Viking. A boy of Innsbruck spends the holidays with his uncle in the Austrian Tyrol.

*Noel for Jean Marie*, Françoise. Scribner's. A childlike telling of Noel in the South of France, as Jean Marie describes it to her white sheep, Patapon.

*Wag-by-Wail*, Beatrix Potter. The Horn Book. Warm-hearted tale of the Westmorland countryside in England.

Eight-to-twelve-year-olds will find

some of these stories of Christmas in other lands to their liking:

*A Grandma for Christmas*, Alta Halverson Seymour. Westminster. A Norwegian Christmas celebration, rich in yuletide customs.

*A Star for Hansi*, Marguerite Vance. Dutton. A story of gentle holiday doings. *Arne and the Christmas Star*, Alta Halverson Seymour. Follett. This story of a twelve-year-old Norwegian boy in a coastal village begins with the annual trip to pasture with the goats and cows and ends with the Christmas celebration.

*Christmas Everywhere*, Elizabeth Sechrist. The observance of the holiday in many different countries of the world.

*Erik's Christmas Camera*, Alta Halverson Seymour. Follett. A Christmas story of a boy in Sweden—with a dash of mystery.

*In Clean Hay*, Eric P. Kelly. Macmillan. Polish children turn adversity into a celebration.

*Kaatje and the Christmas Compass*, Alta Halverson Seymour. Follett. A modern Dutch girl proves to her brother, at Christmas time, that she is not flighty and careless.

*Petite Suzanne*, Marguerite de Angeli. Doubleday. Christmas holiday customs in the Gaspé country of Canada are beautifully described.

*The Christmas Anna Angel*, Ruth Sawyer. Viking. A little girl on a Hungarian farm learns of the true Christmas spirit.

*The Christmas Donkey*, Alta Halverson Seymour. Follett. A boy's devotion to his grandmother is recounted in this book about Christmas in a village in southern France.

*The Top O' Christmas Morning*, Alta Halverson Seymour. Follett. A story of friendship, climaxed by a true Christmas celebration.

*The Christmas Stove*, Alta Halverson Seymour. Follett. Peter and Trudi, orphans, live with Tante Maria, and all three make what might have been a barren existence into a good life, particularly at the Christmas season.

*The Golden Book of Christmas Tales*, James and Lillian Lewicki. Simon & Schuster. Eighteen Nativity legends, handsomely illustrated.

*The Three Kings of Saba*, Alf Evers. Lippincott. Based on an incident found in *The Travels of Marco Polo*.

*Three Young Kings*, George Albee. Watts. Three Cuban school boys find a way to answer the question: Why are gifts given to the rich, rather than the poor?



From *This Way to Christmas*

*This Way to Christmas*, Ruth Sawyer. Harper. Tales of Christmas customs in other lands.

Another group of stories bear more directly on the religious significance of Christmas. These stories, in one way or another, re-create incidents closely associated with the traditional interpretations of the birth of Jesus. For the early-elementary grades there are books like these:

*A Child's Story of the Nativity*, Louise Raymond. Random House. A fine retelling of the birth of Jesus.

*A Little Child*, Elizabeth Orton Jones. Viking. The Bible story, pictured as an elementary school pageant.

*Christmas in the Barn*, Margaret Wise Brown. Crowell. A beautiful interpretation of the story of the Nativity.

*Jesus the Little New Baby*, Mary E. Lloyd. Abingdon-Cokesbury. The story of the Nativity as seen through the eyes of Gray Donkey, Brown Cow, and White Dove.

*Little Shepherd*, Anobel Armour. Winston. A little boy sent his pet lamb to the Christ Child.

*One Little Baby*, Joan Gale Thomas. Lothrop. A counting book of the Nativity story.

*Once in Royal David's City*, Kathleen Lines. Watts. The Nativity story, emphasizing that Christmas is primarily a day of worship.

*The Animals Came First*, Jean-Louise Welsh. Oxford. An original little tale of the animals' part in the first Christmas.

*The Birthday of Little Jesus*, Sterling North. Grosset and Dunlap. Another pleasant religious book for holiday time.

*The Christ Child*, Maud and Miska Peterham. Doubleday. A reverent and child-like telling of the Bible story.

*The First Christmas*, Florida R. Glover. Dutton. The traditional story of Christmas, simply and beautifully told.

*The First Christmas*, Robbie Trent. Harper. The Nativity story for very young children.

*When Jesus Was a Little Boy*, Georgia Eberling. Children's Press. The early life of Jesus is lilyingly told.

*Whose Birthday Is It?* Nancy D. Watson. Knopf. An unusual story of the Nativity.

For the later-elementary grades, stories with significant religious themes include:

*All Through the Night*, Rachel Field. Macmillan. The first Christmas Eve, as the animals in the stable sensed the happenings.

*Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Frances Frost, narrator. Whittlesey. Menotti's opera in narrative version, with the opera dialogue preserved, tells how Amahl, crippled boy, entertained The Wise Men on their way to Bethlehem.

*Ethan, the Shepherd Boy*, Georgiana Ceder. Abingdon-Cokesbury. The exciting change in Bethlehem makes an exciting change in Ethan's life.

*Silent Night: The Story of a Song*, Hertha Pauli. Knopf. An account of how a favorite Christmas hymn came into being.

*Star of Wonder*, Robert E. Coles and Frances Frost. Whittlesey. David and Jean go back through the centuries astronomically to the first Christmas to explore the question of what the wonderful star might have been.

*The Blue-eyed Lady*, Ferenc Molnar. Viking. Love and faith stimulate a little miracle at Christmas time.

*The Boy on the Road*, Marguerite Vance. Dutton. Jotham's stumbling tongue made



him different from other boys. His faith in the miracle of Bethlehem, however, opens to Jotham a new life.

*The Christmas Story*, Elizabeth Yates. Aladdin. The message of Christmas, arranged by Elizabeth Yates, from passages in both the Old and New Testaments.

*The Coming of the King*, Norman Vincent Peale. Prentice-Hall. A sensitive and fresh telling of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus.



*The Juggler of Notre Dame*, Mary Fidelis Todd. Whittlesey. A re-telling of the well-known legend of the juggler who offered to the Blessed Mother the only skill he possessed.

*The Reward of Faith*, Elizabeth Goudge. Coward-McCann. A collection of Christmas legends of the power of religious faith.

*The Small One*, James Tazewell. Winston. The story of the donkey that carried Mary to Bethlehem.

*While Shepherds Watched*, Marguerite Vance. Dutton. A small shepherd boy and his donkey make a contribution on the first Christmas.

*Why the Chimes Rang*, Raymond Alden. Bobbs-Merrill. A small boy's gift lovingly laid on the altar makes the chimes ring.

"Make-believe" is a favorite theme in Christmas stories for children of all ages. Santa Claus, talking animals, animated dolls, fanciful characters of one sort or another have all caught the imagination of the creators of children's literature. Indeed,

fanciful stories make quite a shelf-full of books from which to read. Charming fancy is found in the following literature for the early-elementary grades:

*A Pussycat's Christmas*, Margaret Wise Brown. Crowell. The beauty of Christmas, as seen, heard, smelled, and felt by a little cat.

*Angel in the Woods*, Dorothy P. Lathrop. Macmillan. A toy angel brings Christmas to the woods creatures.

*Babar and Father Christmas*, Jean De Brunhoff. Random House. Babar visits Father Christmas to bring a joyful holiday to the elephant people.

*Bertie's Escapades*, Kenneth Grahame. Lippincott. A refreshing animal Christmas adventure.

*Brownies—It's Christmas!* Glayds L. Adshad. Oxford. Old Grandfather goes to get a Christmas tree and the brownies follow him home. There they decorate the tree and are rewarded, in time, with a tree of their own.

*Christmas Kitten*, Janet Konkle. Children's Press. A homeless kitten finds a Christmas tree, three children, and the spirit of Christmas.

*Christmas Pony*, William Hall. Knopf. An appealing tale of "make-believe."

*Good for Scuffles*, Janet Beattie. Howell, Soskins. A little dog prepares the way for Christmas.

*Joy and the Christmas Angel*, Pamela Bianco. Oxford. An angel ornament from the Christmas tree speaks to a little girl.

*Lullaby*, Josephine Bernhard. Roy. A little cat's lullaby puts the Christ Child to sleep.

*Miss Flora McFlimsey's Christmas Eve*, Mariana. Lothrop. A doll's Christmas celebration.

*One Hundred Christmas Beards*, Roger Duvoisin. Knopf. Santa Claus is angry. Why all the fake Santa's on streets and in stores? But he comes to understand that they, too, have a real place in the Christmas celebration.

*Paddy's Christmas*, Helen A. Monsell. Knopf. A bear cub sets out to find out just what Christmas means.

*The Christmas Bunny*, Will and Nicolas. Harcourt. Davy's adventures when he brought gifts to the forest animals on the day before Christmas.



*The Doll's Christmas*, Tasha Tudor. Oxford. A story based on the dolls in the author's own unusual collection.

*The Little Fir Tree*, Margaret Wise Brown. Crowell. The Christmas tree brightens the winter of a little lame boy.

*The Magic Squirrel*, N. Grishina. Lippincott. A little boy and his adopted grandmother in a wonderful adventure.

*The Real Santa Claus*, Marguerite Walters. Lothrop. Jerry wanted a sled for Christmas. But with so many Santa's around, how would he know the real one to ask? A policeman friend helps answer Jerry's question.

*The Santa Claus Bears*, Dorothy Sherrill. Crowell. Two teddy bears fall out of Santa's sleigh but turn their misfortune into good deeds.

*The Tailor of Gloucester*, Beatrix Potter. Warne. A delightful tale based on a legend the author once heard.

*Wee Robin's Christmas Song*, Elsie-Jean. Nelson. An old legend of how the robin sang for the King at Christmastide.

*Wumpy's Christmas Gift*, Nancy Nash. Lothrop. A toy elephant gives to his friends the things he wants most for himself.

Fanciful stories for older children which are marked with originality and plausibility are these:

*A Tree for Peter*, Kate Seredy. Viking. Peter's faith transforms Shanty Town from ugliness and depression to beauty and hope.

*Alexander's Christmas Eve*, Marjorie Knight. Cadmus. A mischievous toy horse proves to be a fine Christmas gift.

*Big Susan*, Elizabeth Orton Jones. Macmillan. A doll-house family comes alive the night before Christmas.

*Miss Muffet's Christmas Party*, Samuel Crothers. Houghton Mifflin. The spider and Miss Muffet invite "book people"—Cinderella, Alice, Mowgli, Uncle Remus—to a literary party.

*Nancy and Plum*, Betty MacDonald. Lippincott. Steeped in the essence of the old fairy tales.

*Saint Santa Claus*, Ruth Rounds. Dutton. After a plane crash, Brother Klaus helped Barry to his destination. Unusual fancy.

*The Heir to Christmas*, Patricia Gordon.

Viking. Fantasy about a boy and a box of heirloom toys.



From *Angels in the Hayloft*

*The Angel in the Hayloft*, Katherine Niles. Dutton. A little angel comes to earth unexpectedly, helps children understand the true Christmas spirit.

*Three—and Domingo*, Marguerite Bro. Doubleday. A tale of a boy, a dog, a goat, and Domingo, the small Brazilian donkey, who bows to the three kings and kneels to the Babe.

Discriminatively edited anthologies of Christmas literature are always in demand. They provide a ready source of a variety of holiday literature which frequently is available only in such books. They are selective, since their compilers have been chosen because of their wide acquaintance with children's books and their expertness in winnowing out worthy and appealing reading matter. Such anthologies for the primary grades certainly include these:

*Big Treasure Book of Christmas*, Dellwyn Cunningham. Grosset & Dunlap. A compilation of poems, stories, and songs.

*Christmas Tales for Reading Aloud*, Robert Lohan. Daye. As the title implies, these stories are good for oral interpretation.

*Santa's Footprints and Other Christmas*

*Stories*, Walter Retan and others. Aladdin. A group of new short stories, all in the festive spirit of the Yuletide.

*The Santa Claus Book*, Irene Smith. A wide variety of stories and poems about the doings of this much-loved old gentleman.

*The Tall Book of Christmas*, Dorothy Hall Smith, editor. Harper. Both traditional and modern stories, poems, and carols.

And, for the later-elementary grades, the teacher will find these anthologies worth knowing:

book includes legends, customs, stories of early America, of present-day America, and of other lands.

*Let's Celebrate Christmas*, Horace J. Gardner. Barnes. Legends, poetry, stories, plays, carols, and party fun for holiday consumption.

*Merry Christmas to You*, Wilhelmina Harper. Dutton. Both religious and legendary stories are included in this collection.

*1001 Christmas Facts and Fancies*, Alfred Hottes. Dodd, Mead. A rich storehouse of information about Christmas, in America



From *The Christmas Nightingale*

*The Christmas Nightingale*, Eric Kelly. Macmillan. Three short Christmas stories, all finely told.

*The Home Book of Christmas*, May Lamberton Becker, editor. Dodd, Mead. A collection of old favorites and newer, unstereotyped selections from contemporary literature.

*Children's Book of Christmas Stories*, Asa Dickinson and Ada Skinner, editors. Doubleday. About three dozen stories, some very familiar, others less well known, comprise this collection.

*Christmas*, Robert Schaffler. Dodd, Mead. The spirit and significance of the holiday, in fiction, drama, pageants, and programs. *Christmas: A Book of Stories Old and New*, Alice Dalgliesh. Scribner's. This

and around the world, from earliest times to the present.

*The Animals' Christmas*, Anne Thaxter Eaton. Viking. This distinctive anthology includes carols, poems, and stories of Christmas in which animals play major roles.

*The Christmas Book of Legends and Stories*, Elva Smith and Alice Hazeltine. Lothrop. Legends and stories of the Christ Child and of the spirit of the holiday.

*The Long Christmas*, Ruth Sawyer. Viking. Old tales told in true holiday spirit.

*The Shining Tree*, Hildegard Hawthorne and others. Knopf. Well-balanced collection of stories. Good for reading aloud.

*The Story of the Christmas Tree*, Hertha Pauli. Houghton Mifflin. Six stories about



the history of the beloved Christmas symbol.

*Told under the Christmas Tree*, Association for Childhood Education. Macmillan. Stories and poems of great diversity in setting and with strong holiday appeals.

Christmas means time for poetry as well as for stories, for poems illumine the holiday in a manner that prose never can. They vivify thoughts and feelings appropriate to the moods and celebrations that accompany the advent of December 25. Their happy phrases and graphic word pictures linger felicitously in the minds of youngsters from one Christmas season to the next. Books of poetry appropriate for the elementary schools at this season of the year are in print. In addition to Clement C. Moore's *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, the beloved "Night before Christmas," avail-

able in many editions, these collections can be enthusiastically recommended:

*Away in a Manger: Christmas Verse*, Jean Thoburn, compiler. Oxford. Delightfully appropriate poetry, largely in lyric mood. Out of print, but worth searching for.

*Christmas Bells Are Ringing*, Sara and John E. Brewton. Macmillan. An extensive and diversified collection of holiday verses.

*Christmas in the Woods*, Frances Frost. Harper. A Christmas poem about the little forest creatures.

*Come Christmas*, Eleanor Farjeon. Lippincott. Poems for the holidays, of the distinctive Farjeon quality.

*The Christmas Parade*, Ada Reeves. Houghton Mifflin. Verses about what the animals want for Christmas.

*The Christmas Story*, Olive Driver. Exposition Press. A reverent telling of the old familiar religious story in verse.

*The Twelve Days of Christmas*, Old Carol. Harper. The old folk song, with exquisite pictures by Ilonka Karasz.

*The Twelve Days of Christmas*, Old English. Grosset and Dunlap. The delightful song, delightfully illustrated.

*Welcome, Christmas!* Anne Thaxter Eaton. Viking. Poems in various moods of the joys of Christmastide.

In America's children's books there is no dearth of Christmas literature. If Little Jack Horner's teacher knows how to pull the plums of literature out of the Christmas pie, youngsters will go home for the holidays with their minds filled with bright thoughts—thoughts which reaffirm their faith that the spirit of love and goodwill can, in many ways, still be kept alive in their world.

#### A Walk

Oh lovely, lovely, lovely!  
We get to go again.

Kristy Lien, Kindergarten  
San Diego City Schools

## "Why Not Try Self-Selection?"

"What can I do to interest my seventh-grade class in reading?" This question coming from a classroom teacher was a familiar one to the group of coordinators and consultants at the grade-level meeting. "Why not try self-selection?" said one of the consultants.

This suggestion was accepted by the seventh-grade teacher who was concerned about his class. His success and enthusiasm, plus encouragement from the curriculum office, have inspired others to try this plan of reading until there are now seven teachers in the El Monte School District who are using self-selection of reading materials as a reading program.

A search for background material revealed that Dr. Willard Olson in his article on "Seeking, Self-selection, and Pacing in the Use of Books by Children," referred to self-selection as a useful concept if one is to use the seeking tendencies of children to best advance their competence in skills, attitudes, and information. Delores Cooper Palmer, in her study, "To Determine the Reaction of a Fourth Grade to a Program of Self-selection of Reading Materials," defined the term self-selection in this way:

for purposes of this study, the term self-selection was taken to mean that children have the opportunity to choose the material they read during the regular period of reading instruction. This means that books of many types, on many subjects, and of varying degrees of difficulty were made available. The range of reading difficulty extended from beginning reading books to those labeled beyond the known ability of the most competent reader in

the room.<sup>1</sup>

Additional helpful materials, which included Grace Garrettson's report to the Claremont Reading Conference, were assembled in a kit for each teacher in the self-selection program.

Visitations to other districts were made. Discussions with members of the curriculum office and consultants from the Los Angeles County Schools Office helped the teachers who wanted to try individualizing their reading program more exactly than the "three-group" method allows.

At the close of the second year in self-selection, it was possible to make the interesting observation that there is no *one* "best way" of handling self-selection which works for all teachers. Each must find the way that works best for him in the keeping of records, time allotment, grouping of books, methods of reporting, audience days, etc.

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\*The author wishes to express appreciation to the following El Monte teachers for supplying the anecdotal records and other materials which have made the writing of this article possible: Victor Baird, Eugene Dixon, Bob Killian, Doris Nye, Mary Sain, Naomi Sawyer, and William Stadlander. The author also wishes to express appreciation to Marian Jenkins, Consultant in Elementary Education, County of Los Angeles Schools; and Dr. Richard Brown, Director of Curriculum, El Monte School District, who have by their inspiration and cooperation contributed greatly to the success of this program.

<sup>1</sup>Delores Cooper Palmer, *To Determine the Reaction of a Fourth Grade to a Program of Self-selection in Reading Materials*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Utah, 1953. p. 1.

An eighth-grade teacher who has thirty-seven pupils, with a class reading achievement range of six years, felt that individualized reading most nearly met the needs of his class. He was interested to find that hero stories, such as *Young Ike*, *Daniel Boone*, and *Ulysses S. Grant* headed the list of preferred books reported on the Springfield Interest Finder, an inventory given at the beginning of the school year. Sports books and science-fiction occupied second and third places respectively. The results of the inventory were sent to the district central library. The librarian sent sixty books of the special interest type, which were on various grade levels. These books were augmented by library books checked out by the pupils during trips to the public library, district supplementary readers, and state adopted textbooks. An additional source was the recreational kit of fifty books sent to all seventh and eighth-grade classes, which was changed six times a year.

Teachers have said, "It certainly takes a lot of books and other reading materials to carry on a successful program in Individualized Reading." Such a statement is true. Not all the materials needed come from the district library. Pupils can bring from home books and magazines which can be shared by all the class.

One teacher devised an interesting card file. A large board was placed in front of the room; on it there were thirty-seven clothes pins, one for each child. Each pin held a card on which was written the student's name, the name of the book, the name of the author, the number of pages in the book, a few lines telling why the student selected the book, and his plan for reporting on the book. This file served as

a checkout board for all books, as well as a source of information for students, visitors, and the teacher.

This same teacher followed the plan of having each pupil read twice a week individually for periods of five minutes or longer, depending on the need and interest. A record card was kept by the teacher on each student, listing books read, comprehension, and vocabulary needs. During another period, instruction was given in the skills in which the student needed help.

What do parents think of self-selection? According to reports received from parent conferences, they are in favor of it. One parent remarked, pretending to be disgruntled, "I used to be able to stay home on Saturday; *now*, I have to take my boy to the library every week to check out more books."

Most of the teachers using self-selection evaluate it by saying, "I like it because my children like it. All of my discipline problems are solved because the children are reading books on their own achievement level and ones in which they are interested, because the books are of their own choosing." One teacher asked, "How do you *stop* them from reading? Mine take out a book as soon as they come in from recess, and start reading again as soon as spelling and arithmetic assignments are completed. It has made a wonderful change in my class, but I wonder if there is such a thing as reading too much?"

Research doesn't answer this question, but most researchers agree with Helen Robinson's view that a study of the reading interests of students is one of the most important aspects of teaching reading for teachers from the primary grades through



college. Dr. Robinson explains that children learn to read more rapidly if they are interested in the materials they use in reading.

G. Frederic Kuder and Blanche B. Paulson believe that interests are such a strong motivating force that it is necessary for a teacher to know what her children's interests are in order to help them in all phases of school work. Kuder and Paulson also state that teachers in remedial work have realized success when they have used the technique of discovering a retarded reader's interests, then supplying him with books and other material on *his* reading level, thus utilizing this strong motivating force—interest.

In addition to interest inventories, Helen Robinson includes case studies, personal interviews, records of books withdrawn from libraries, diary records of books, and magazines and newspapers read during a given period of time as valid techniques for investigating reading interests. Paul Witty suggests an informal interview between the teacher and pupils, usually guided by questions.

Teachers sometimes ask the question, "How do I get students away from reading a single type of book?" Robinson believes that it is necessary in this instance to lead the students to closely allied or similar types of books. Teachers must not only satisfy a student's current interests but must also be on the alert to promote additional interests. She states, "For all children, it is the responsibility of each teacher to cultivate and encourage reading interests which are appropriate for the child's level of general maturity. Interests should expand with age, and in certain areas, they

should be intensified."<sup>2</sup>

One seventh-grade teacher started self-selection in February because her group seemed bored and restless. The reading achievement range was from fourth grade to eleventh grade. The pupils had finished the state textbook and had read a few library books. Since February, each pupil has read an average of two books per week. The restlessness has become less evident, and the boredom has vanished. An outstanding reporting job was done by a group that dramatized "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." The chairman wrote the parts on slips of paper and instructed the players to *really* learn them, and they did.

This teacher used a note-book, saving a separate page for each child, on which she listed difficulties, date for each book each child read, book, and the page number for each difficulty. When asked why she liked self-selection, she replied, "I like it because the children like it, although I'll have to admit some of my scientific wizards keep me hopping to keep ahead of them. Anyone know where I can find an eleventh grade chemistry book? One of my students needs it for an experiment."

An eighth-grade teacher who had a class with a reading achievement range from fifth grade to college level reported that his group was particularly interested in early pioneer stories about Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and other frontier heroes. The boys' second interest was in hunting and fishing stories; the girls' major interest was in love stories. All were interested in teen-age problems, and the class presented many socio-dramas using

<sup>2</sup>Helen Robinson, "What Research Says to the Teacher of Reading, Reading Interests," *The Reading Teacher*, Feb., 1955. p. 177.



material from *Into Your Teens*, and from articles read in the Science Research Associates booklets on teen-agers. This teacher believed that an important part of the self-selection program was the sharing of materials and ideas by the students with each other and with the teacher.

He said that he was amazed by the many different types of publications read by members of the class and by the increasing ability of many students to find stories that related to a current event. He related that because of the assignment to write an essay about the Liberty Bell, for the American Legion Contest, the students read many stories on this subject. Some read four or five articles before starting to write. The teacher thought that this was quite unusual for eighth-grade students. When asked to evaluate the program he said, "I like it because I have more time with individual students, and I believe I am taking care of individual needs more effectively."

One eighth-grade teacher reported that the children liked self-selection, but that she wanted to see more evidence of success by means of objective testing. This point was one commonly raised; however, most teachers using self-selection agreed with the fifth-grade teacher who wrote, "Our experiment has proved to those of us who have used it that comfortable working conditions, adequate individual help, and the realization that each child has a rhythm of his own in learning are more important tools than formal techniques."

A fifth-grade teacher, after six months of self-selection, felt that his pupils' reactions to this way of reading were in proportion to their reading abilities. The accelerated readers were delighted and read

many books following their own special interests. The retarded readers decided to read together in a group, from an easy supplementary reader, with teacher guidance. The teacher was very much interested in this, and he thought that possibly more guidance was needed in use of time and selection of reading materials. He agreed with other teachers that "discipline" problems had disappeared when the class was using the method of self-selection.

Marian Jenkins found that there were fewer "disciplinary" problems when self-selection was used, and many troublesome children found an absorbing interest for the first time.

During an audience day in a fifth-grade teacher's room, a girl who plans to become a nurse used several books, including a health book (fifth grade vocabulary level) and a college physiology book, to prepare her report on parts of the body. She also used original charts and a plastic torso, nicknamed Homer, discussing each part as she removed it from the torso. A boy, reporting on a book about a pony express rider, had made a diorama using a cardboard carton, earth, twigs for trees, and a plastic horse and rider. He was explaining how one rider relieved the other at pony express stations when he was asked, "Couldn't the riders stop anywhere for coffee, or anything?" "Well," he answered, "they stopped at the pony express stations for coffee. I guess you could call it the first coffee break."

A sixth-grade teacher said that his group was reading an average of two or three books a week. He found that some of the students were inclined to read materials on one topic, but he had succeeded in guiding their interests in other direc-

tions. His group had particularly enjoyed using the opaque projector, flashing illustrations and stories they had made on a screen.

Another sixth-grade teacher made a sociogram of her group at the beginning of the year. The results supported her suspicion that the class contained a boy "star" with a "cluster" surrounding him, a girl "star" with her "cluster," plus several "isolates." These "stars" were frequently poor influences on their peers, as was evidenced by anti-social acts in the audio-visual room and on the playground, which were approved by the group.

The teacher introduced self-selection as a possible way to break up the "gangs." That she was successful is borne out by the results of a second sociogram made toward the close of the school year. This chart showed the entire class in groups of twos and threes. There were no "stars," no "clusters," and no "isolates." The class enjoyed individualized reading, directing their energies to the writing of original poetry, plays, and stories. Such activities gave them more satisfaction, by their own admission, than their previous anti-social behavior.

Results for one eighth-grade class, taken from the California Achievement Test, revealed that after one year of individualized reading all students had progressed in reading skills at least one year over the previous year. Ten students had progressed one year and six months. Four students had progressed two to three years. All students have a mental capacity of average or above average.

The El Monte teachers who have tried individualized reading agree that a good

way to help children grow is to take each child where he is and supply him with a favorable social and intellectual environment that will stimulate his desire to think and produce creatively at his own level. They believe that self-selection of reading materials is one way to achieve this goal.

If you should ask one of these teachers what to do with a class that was bored, restless, and not achieving up to expectancy, you should not be surprised if he said, "Why not try self-selection?"

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## "Listening" in an Integrated Language Arts Program

In all my reading on this subject of listening, the incident that made the most profound impression on me was found in the National Council of Teachers of English pamphlet, *Skill in Listening*, published in 1944.<sup>1</sup> The first page of the pamphlet begins as follows:

Not long ago a Hindu teacher and an American teacher were discussing literacy in India and America. The Hindu teacher listened attentively to the American's statistics, to the high hopes for America, to his suggestions for the advancement of literacy in India.

"We should welcome your help," said the Indian. "Perhaps we have something to offer in return. For while I regret the inability of many of my people to read and write, yet we must consider further the meaning of literacy. In the United States you measure literacy by the written word. In India we have a literacy of the spoken word—thoughtfully spoken and thoughtfully listened to."

The implications of the phrases "thoughtfully spoken and thoughtfully listened to" are tremendous, and their ramifications and importance in an integrated language arts program are wonderful to anticipate.

To many people the idea of *listening* as a recognized part of the language arts program seems to be a novel as well as a very recent development. But it is surprising how much *has* been written on the subject. Right here I must confess the

consternation and stagefright that came over me as I continued to read on the subject. The roster of authors' names who have written on listening reads like the roster of members of the National Conference of Research in English. Is it possible to present something new and challenging to the very people who have written so well on this subject?

### Current literature on listening

The chapter entitled "The Program in Listening," in *The English Language Arts*<sup>2</sup> is a thorough exploration of the field. Footnote references to Harlen Adams, Althea Beery, Ralph Nichols, George Murphy, Wilbur Hatfield, J. N. Hook, Max Herzberg, John J. DeBoer and so many others lead one on to choice paragraphs in professional magazines and reference books. The chapter on "Listening" in the recent book *Language Arts for Today's Children*<sup>3</sup> is a delightful exposition and expansion of the fine promise given in the first volume of the series.

In the *English Journal* and other professional magazines, Angela Broening, Edgar Dale, and Margaret Early have care-

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<sup>1</sup>By Alice Sterner, Katherine Saunders, and Milton Kaplan.

<sup>2</sup>The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, *The English Language Arts*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952. pp. 328-47.

<sup>3</sup>The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, *Language Arts for Today's Children*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954. pp. 71-105.

fully outlined excellent listening programs for the teacher to follow. I need not repeat their recommendations here.

The January 1955 issue of *Education* is a gold mine of information devoted entirely to listening. I feel very much like the young lad who could think of nothing new to add to his evening prayers. He wrote out his regular statements of gratitude and the usual number of requests for additional blessings, and pinned the list to the wall of his bedroom. That night when he retired, he pointed to the written prayer, jumped into bed and said, "Them's my sentiments!" I want to point to all the excellent articles in this issue of *Education* and repeat, "Them's my sentiments!"

Arthur Heilman calls attention to the importance of listening in the curriculum. I was pleased to read this meaningful statement, "Listening is not learning, and neither *wishing* or *more* listening will make it so."

Seth Fessenden describes seven different levels of listening. Ralph Nichols has broken down effective listening into ten components. He suggests that a listener "be attentive, quiet, dynamic, constructive, ready, bright, interested, rested, willing, and eager to concentrate." We agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Nichols, but we suspect that he hasn't been in a high school classroom for some time. Donald Bird of Stephens College gives a lifetime of reading in his excellent bibliography of selected materials on listening.

#### What is the role of listening?

I have been asked the question, "What is the role of listening in an integrated language arts program?" Listening is the narrative thread that ties all the

other parts together. It is the fluid in the blood stream that carries in suspension all the red and white corpuscles. It is a 3-D communications receiver or communications system on which more refined communication systems must depend.

I am thinking of a comparison made between a pile of colored stones and a beautiful mosaic. The stones in the mosaic are the same as those in the pile, but they have been arranged in a beautiful pattern and set in a mortar that holds the pattern in place. Shall we say that, in an integrated language arts project, listening could be the mortar that binds together several language arts experiences into a meaningful, pleasurable, purposeful whole—all skillfully arranged by the accomplished artisan—the teacher? I know that the teacher will not think these claims extravagant, or I should blush to make them here.

#### Different kinds of listening

In an integrated program the motivation, the stimulation, the organization, the research, the learning activities, the correlation, and the evaluation, all may depend in varying degrees on listening skills. It is possible to have a whole unit, and a very profitable one, built entirely around speaking and listening experiences. From the integrated point of view, the listening experiences can be meaningful and purposeful. Pupils and teacher will be listening to each other to expedite activities pertaining to the project or real-life experience that is engrossing their interest at the time. Many types of listening are involved in the life of an integrated language arts unit. In the December issue of the *Journal of Education*, Margaret Early lists 31 different kinds of listening, all of which may

be experienced in an integrated program. These 31 types will be prefaced by a special type of listening on the part of the teacher, who must listen to the expressed and unexpressed needs and interests of the boys and girls in the group. This, I think, is the most important kind of listening of all. The teacher must first of all be sensitive to this kind of listening before it can become a part of the learning experience of the children. The aim of an integrated language arts program is to produce well-integrated personalities in our young men and women. That objective demands a special kind of listening not often described in articles on teaching the communication skills. There is an intangible something needed in the whole area of communications so that experience therein will help individuals, as Bossing says, meet their personal and social needs toward ever nobler ends.

#### Experience conditions listening

I have been intrigued by certain articles on the teaching of reading—stating such ideas as that the word must first be in the child's oral vocabulary and that he brings the meaning out of his experience to the printed page and not vice versa. This must be true of listening also. The child cannot get meaning or understanding by listening to ideas that are foreign to his intellectual or cultural experience. Everything that a child sees and hears passes through the filter of his cultural experience. Ideas that are hostile or incompatible with the openings in this filter will be rejected.

The anthropologist, Benjamin Lee Whorf, says (I am quoting from Lalla Walker's article in the January issue of

*Education*):

a person can perceive and communicate only what his language and logic permit him to—both language and logic being so strongly inculcated in him by his culture that he cannot think beyond their limits. What are the effects of culture on the ability to listen to different things?

An interesting or amusing illustration of how a person's background of experience conditions his response to what he hears is revealed in the story of the three psychiatrists. Two of them were walking down the corridor discussing their work when a colleague passed them. He smiled and greeted them with a cheery "Good Morning." Not a word of acknowledgment was given him by the other two. They continued walking in silence for several seconds. Finally one said to the other, "Now what do you suppose he meant by that?"

Not all who hear, listen. I think the reason is that their affective processes have not been constructively involved in their learning experiences. The heart has not accepted their intellectual conclusions.

Edna St. Vincent Millay has said it so well in her sonnet:

Pity me that the heart is slow to learn  
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

How can we help the heart to listen and learn and keep pace with the mind?

We see the results of this oversight or lack of emphasis on the affective processes in our teaching when our young men and women go out into the working world. In a study made of 4000 men and women who lost their jobs, it was found that over 80% of them were competent in the skills they needed to perform their job properly, but that they just could not get along with people. Socially these 80% were poorly-integrated personalities. And to the de-



gree that they failed to get along, their education had failed them.

### **Listening and good human relations**

What are some of the skills that are needed to help one get along well with people? What are some of the elements of good human relations? Isn't it enough if you listen to and speak to people? Evidently not! There must be a willingness to accept and to understand. Through the right kind of listening experiences, sympathetic attitudes and appreciations can be encouraged. Listening can be a vehicle for the teaching of good human relations, which is considered one of the most important goals of education by parent-teacher groups. The child must have experiences that will help him to realize that all races have made great contributions to civilization in art and music, in science, in concepts of law and democracy; that all men are basically alike, in spite of myths and stereotypes; that prejudice and discrimination hurt the offender as well as the victim; and that the American way of life is based on magnificent traditions which must ever be encouraged.

Boys and girls coming from community backgrounds in which they have had unhappy experiences in these areas will be able to hear our platitudes, but they will not be able to understand. What their experience has made them will speak so loudly that they cannot hear what we have to say. They will listen with the ears and the mind, but not with the heart, and our ideas will be rejected. The listening filter of their cultural and experiential background will not permit the meaning of our sounds to get through. It is our responsibility as educators to see that each child

develops the insight, and the sympathy, and the skills in the give-and-take of daily living that will enable him to get along well with others; to give each pupil childhood experiences that are happy and successful—that make him a person who likes people. For it will naturally follow then that people will like him.

Walter F. Stromer of Cornell describes the good listener as one who:

understands his own attitudes and beliefs well enough that he doesn't need to jump to their defense, even silently, whenever he hears ideas expressed which conflict with his own. His sense of security and belonging is strong enough that he can afford to be silent, does not need to interrupt the speaker, nor try to dominate the conversation in a group. Let us hope that more and more children will have the kind of home life that will give them the self-assurance necessary for good listening.

But what if they don't have this desirable kind of home life? (And we know that many of them don't.) We teachers must try to compensate for the lack and give the children experiences that will help them. An integrated language arts experience is one that will help fill that need.

### **Opportunities for listening in integration**

In a rich series of integrated language arts experiences, the child will have opportunities to listen to many different opinions from all kinds of people. He will learn to accept opinions and directions from all kinds of people. He will learn to evaluate and draw his conclusions. The purposeful on-going activity will make it necessary and important for him to listen—and in the process he will get more than just the answer to his questions. He will acquire an attitude of thoughtful listening



and careful evaluating of all that he has heard.

Once we have given the child enough of these experiences so that he has a favorable and willing attitude toward listening, we can give him learning activities to help in the further development of listening skills. Soon the individual will become secure enough so that he will be able to examine himself as a listening apparatus. Is he hearing what the speaker intends? Is he missing something? Dr. Henry Hitt Crane of Central Methodist Church, Detroit, compares our hearing apparatus to a radio or television set which may or may not be tuned in properly. With no defect in our hearing apparatus, except tuning in, some of us may go through life never quite able to hear and understand clearly what the speaker has to say. We must first be willing to listen and be tuned in. We have the power to force ourselves to listen. *We* can strain to hear and understand because we *want* to. The child will learn to do this first because it furthers his immediate purpose; later on the need for social approval will give him another purpose. He will become, as a polite listener, a socially desirable member of a democratic society, and also, as a critical listener, he will become a valuable member and supporter of all that a democratic society and government stand for.

In my effort to stress the importance of tolerance and acceptance of other opinions, I do not mean to recommend a mind so broad and open that it is able to form no opinion of its own. That is just as dangerous as the mind that accepts no other opinion but its own.

#### Listening to evaluate

At a National Council of Teachers of

English convention, President Lou LaBrant warned us, "Our world is in danger today from those who use language to mislead, and from those who openly rewrite history in a bizarre way." The spoken word can mislead as well as the written word. It is our responsibility to give youth experience in evaluating the truth and the significance of what they hear. The dangers of fascism and communism lie in the other extreme.

What I am suggesting is a kind of marriage between the application of the scientific method in problem solving and the Rights of Man as described by the United Nations. The recognition of the integrity of the individual and all that it implies; the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement; an unimpassioned approach to the solving of problems in our daily living—all these can be acquired through experience-listening. It is just as important to provide this kind of experience-listening if we want learning to take place as it is to provide experience-reading. The individual, out of his own experiences, good, bad, or indifferent, supplies the meaning to the auditory symbols that beat upon his consciousness. The effective listener must have the rights of man as his philosophy of life. Successful listening experiences in this area must make up the screen or filter through which he hears what other people have to say. Gathering all the information that he can, he then considers the data in the light of his problem, makes his hypothesis, draws his conclusions, and considers his findings true only so long as no new evidence is available.

"Is all of this listening?" you may ask.

Yes, indeed. We listen with our minds and

our hearts, as well as our ears. Nichols says that effective listening is a full time job. Our individual, family, class, community, and national cultural experiences help determine the different wave lengths to which we can tune our listening apparatus.

**Integrated program ideal for listening experiences**

And is this necessarily a part of only an integrated language arts program? Not necessarily—no. But most conveniently and ideally—yes! All the different types of listening recommended by leaders in the field of language arts could hardly be taught in a vacuum. Even as separate subjects they would lose meaning and effectiveness. We believe in real life experiences, purposeful and meaningful learning. The integrated language arts experience is the natural theater for such learn-

ing to take place.

In such a program are the interest, the need, the motivation, the stimulation, the excitement of problem solving, the thrill of self-discovery, and the security that come from the ability to make our own conclusions and decisions. In such a matrix of language experiences, listening becomes the binding material that holds it all together. The concomitant of successful learning activities, such as these, is an emotional reaction that helps the heart and the mind to keep pace with each other in learning about life and the world in which we live.

Then at long last we can paraphrase Millay's poem:

Rejoice that the heart can quickly learn  
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

LOIS V. JOHNSON

## Group Discussion and the Development of Oral Language

Oral communication enters a new developmental stage at about the time that children enter school. Up to this time the children have grown through a sequence of stages and have learned much in oral language. Oral communication learnings in the primary grades assume their relative position when the children's learnings are viewed as a continuum in which the initial stages have already been achieved, to be followed in the beginning school years with new learnings, and in later school and adults years with further refinements.

There is no doubt that children possess considerable background and attainments

in oral language—varying, of course, for each child—as evidenced by a typical first day of school.

Early morning sunshine spread through the quiet of the empty primary classroom on the first day of school. The sunlight added gaiety to the carefully prepared room with its cheerful pottery bowls of zinnias, the circle of chairs around the big rug, the bulletin board with pictures of vacation activities, the reading table and low shelves with thoughtfully selected books, the easels, games, and blocks—all indicating happy times ahead which would involve much talking and listening.

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As the children and parents began arriving, the quiet gave way to the steadily increasing hum of voices. Somehow the teacher smiled at and talked with each child as she directed him to some center of interest in the room, she greeted each parent, and registered all the children. Through the swelling sound of voices, snatches came through: "—an' my Mommy says that—," "—wasn't agoin' to do—."

Later, in reviewing this busy part of the day, the teacher had tangible proof that these school beginners had made major gains in oral communication in their pre-school years, that they came to school with varied individual backgrounds, and that they had grown to different developmental levels. Further thoughts and questions assailed the teacher as she considered the relation of the children to the curriculum in oral communication and to their past experiences with oral language.

*What oral language experience have school beginners had?* In their pre-school years most children have had the listening and sensory experiences which were the basis of their speech and vocabulary. Despite the differences which are shown in the actual word counts of various studies, the growth in size of the speaking and understanding vocabularies is confirmed. The vocabulary and growth in sentence structure have resulted from repeated conversational contacts with parents, siblings, and informal play groups.

The children have done much talking of a conversational type in their play and in all activities of their daily lives. They have learned something of what kind of people they are and what others conceive them to be and to do through responses to their language. They have learned what to say to evoke certain responses. They have

chattered on to their playmates, sometimes to their toys, sometimes to themselves. In dramatic play and in retelling favorite stories they have further added to their oral development.

*What are some differences in the oral language requirements of the school and the children's pre-school experiences?* Conversation has been a frequent experience as contrasted with discussion. Discussion deals with a central topic, discourages digressions, and tends toward a conclusion or solution. The latter will now become a more important part of the language experience of the child in his school life.

Another new dimension is the use of oral language with large groups. The use of oral language in speaking to large numbers of their peers is a new experience—exciting and pleasurable for most children, but difficult and frightening to others.

The large numbers in a class impose restrictions on when and how often each child can speak, which is quite unlike the freedom to talk which he enjoyed in his play and at home.

*How will the children feel toward the school's use of oral language?* The school's use of oral language is of necessity different from children's previous experiences. It is important to understand how the children feel if we are to help promote positive attitudes on their part. For example, they must feel that their speaking is acceptable and that it doesn't need to be constantly corrected. They should understand why they cannot always talk when they wish, and they should not construe this as rejection of them as individuals. We need alertness to the children's view of the school situation because

it is unlike the adults' view of the same thing. The emotional climate in which language activities take place is a contributing factor to the children's oral growth.

*How can the transition be made from the children's present developmental stages to the primary curriculum?* The transition can be made easy and enjoyable for the young learners by putting to use their present oral abilities as soon as possible. Such a demonstration of acceptance gives children confidence in their place in school. Their oral abilities have developed through several years and are accomplishments—no matter how imperfect. The curriculum takes on its personal, psychological meaning for the children as they use their oral language in the many activities of the day.

*What teaching practices will make for maximum growth in oral language?* Teaching procedures can give children the chance to use and expand their developing powers, or it can restrict them. Selection of procedures cannot be made all at one time, since reassessment is needed from time to time to best serve the growth process. In general, teaching practices will be chosen which can best build on past achievements, make their contribution to the reality of present living, and, therefore, provide a basis for future years and other language skills.

One of the curricular experiences intended to promote growth in oral language is the discussion. Discussion periods may involve the whole class or small groups of children. The primary teacher may feel a greater sense of responsibility for the guidance of the whole group, but she uses the same principles when working with smaller groups.

Discussion periods involving the whole class are used for group planning and sharing. The group planning is directed toward a topic or problem of common interest, uses wide participation, results in a plan or decision, and expects the children to guide their actions by the group decision. Examples of this type of discussion are plans for the day; plans for a study-trip; plans for group activities, such as gardening, a mural, or playing a game. The second type of discussion period is called by various names, such as "sharing time" and "show and tell." This differs from the first type by its lack of a central idea. However, the teacher's role in conducting these large group discussion periods has some common elements and purposes.

The teacher's role in group discussion periods is one of leadership. Because of the complexity and demands of the role, it taxes the mature person's skills and insight. It should not be delegated to a child. The child can only "call on" other children, and he cannot be expected to "call on" those who most need to have a share, nor can he use the teachable moments which arise. Setting the mood of the discussion through comments and manner and guiding the discussion to a solution requires repeated exercise of mature judgment.

In the informality of discussion the individuality of children's oral language is evident. They use the vocabulary, phrases, and family speech patterns which tell the teacher much about them and their backgrounds. When particularly apt or accurate language is used, it can be re-inforced by the teacher's reiteration of the same word or phrase in her response. When a first

grade was building an airport with blocks, Sid explained, "I have a good idea how to make the administration building." The teacher replied, "Will you show us your idea for the administration building?" Another response would be, "Sid used the right word—administration building."

Children give many ideas in any one discussion period, in fact, many more than can be used or followed up. The ideas and information and plans which they give in a discussion are varied and unpredictable. For this reason the teacher, as the group leader, is continually selecting the facts, attitudes, or questions to be emphasized. This continual selective process takes several forms: active acceptance of ideas for further consideration or use, passive acceptance of something as "all right," and ignoring or correcting. Sometimes the apparent ignoring of a child's remark is a kindness intended to avoid embarrassment for him.

Participation skills can be learned naturally and put to use at once in group discussion. Some of the skills which primary children need are: the ability to express their ideas clearly; the ability not to take an undue share of time; the ability to enjoy both listening and speaking in a group; the ability to appreciate others' ideas; the ability not to repeat what has been said; the ability to help with pertinent contributions which move the discussion forward; the ability to use courteous ways in agreeing, disagreeing, and asking for further information and clarification. The degree to which children can learn and use these and other participation skills will depend on the maturity of the children and the group. The teacher adjusts the teaching to the children's ability to

take on participation skills.

The group oral discussion provides one of the best opportunities in the primary school to give attention to English usage. It combines much hearing of desirable language on the part of the children with practice as they talk of things which are interesting and important to them. While the children focus on the content of the discussion, the teacher may unobtrusively help children to continue acceptable patterns of usage and to note less acceptable ones.

Through group discussion the children have experience with a variety of intellectual processes. They analyze their problems or the subject being discussed; they recall similar problems; they propose solutions or courses of action; they decide if further information is needed; and they understand the action to be taken or the conclusion. They use, at their level and with their interests, the intellectual processes of problem solving.

#### Summary

The sequential nature of children's learning of oral language is a guide: (1) in understanding the status of children when they enter school and the primary grades, (2) in keeping relative and attainable the expectation of curricular learnings, and (3) in adapting teaching procedures. Group discussion is an important curricular experience used to further the learnings in this area of communication. Elements of group discussion are new to primary children, as are the large groups with which it is used. The teacher in group discussion has a complex leadership role, since multiple skills and understandings are used simultaneously to produce the multiple results which inhere in the process.



# Children's Spelling Needs and the Implications of Research

Although many spelling investigations have been carried out during the past fifty years or more, the results achieved in the teaching of spelling have not been satisfactory when measured by the effectiveness with which children spell in situations that call for written expression. The memorization of a list of isolated words, the principal approach to the learning of spelling in the past, failed to produce efficient spellers. Likewise, the attempts to master the study lists of the present decade are failing to develop adequate spelling ability in a large percentage of children.

Leading authorities are of the opinion that we do have available professional knowledge based on research that would go far toward preventing and solving the spelling problem if this knowledge were put into practice in the classroom. In view of this situation, the writer was stimulated to conduct a classroom experiment using selected professional knowledge in an attempt to improve the spelling ability of the pupils.

Briefly, this study was made to: (a) determine the spelling needs of the pupils of a sixth grade class through classroom research and experimentation, and (b) suggest procedures for spelling instruction to meet those needs by utilizing the implications of scientific investigation and expert opinion.

The investigation was limited to a suburban, consolidated, twelve-teacher school serving the community of Landover Hills, Maryland. With the exception of

initial data to determine the general spelling competence of the school as a whole in the spontaneous writings of the children, the study was further limited to forty-one pupils of a sixth grade class. Most of the pupils of this class came from average middle-class homes. The I.Q.'s ranged from 76 to 136 with an average of 104.

The study extended over a period of five months from January to June. However, basic classroom organization and teaching procedures had been established in the preceding months of the school year.

## Sources of data and procedures

As a means of evaluating the general spelling competence of the school as a whole, each pupil in Grades III through VI was asked to write a story about any topic of interest, no stipulation being made as to length. The children were asked to spell as well as they could without the help of the teacher. Their spelling errors in these stories were analyzed in terms of all errors made by each grade group, all errors being pooled. This analysis consisted of determining the percentage of spelling errors in relation to the total running words. The resulting ratios were compared with those of similar studies to determine the spelling proficiency of this particular group.

For the sixth grade experimental group, the spelling errors in the stories were further analyzed to determine:

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1. The actual words misspelled for the grade group and for the individual pupils; the repetitions of all errors for all the pupils; and the most frequently misspelled words.
2. The types of errors made.
3. The occurrence of the misspelled words in (a) *The Pupils' Own Vocabulary Spellers*,<sup>1</sup> (b) *A Basic Life Spelling Vocabulary*,<sup>2</sup> and (c) *The 2,000 Commonest Words for Spelling*.<sup>3</sup>

Again in June each pupil of the experimental group was asked to write another story. These stories were analyzed as previously described and comparisons made with the results of the first stories.

To meet the individual writing needs, two sources of words were used. These were the textbooks based on the writings of pupils, and the individual pupil lists. *The Pupils' Own Vocabulary Spellers* were selected as the basic textbooks. The words used in this series of spellers were based on the study, *A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children*, by Henry D. Rinsland.<sup>4</sup>

The pupils were motivated to write freely in a variety of situations. An individual list of words which each pupil misspelled was kept in a card file at his desk. Whenever a word was misspelled, it was checked with the complete list of the spelling series, Grades II through VIII. If the word occurred in this list, it was added to the pupils file for study. Local words of importance which the child desired to learn were also added to this individual list.

An analysis of the types of errors, along with other standardized data, indicated symptoms of difficulty and some definite points where instruction should be

given. However, in an attempt to go deeper into the difficulties and their causes, the *Gates-Russell Spelling Diagnosis Tests*<sup>5</sup> were given to the lower group of pupils. Results of these tests showed a general verbal and linguistic retardation of one to three years for fifteen pupils. This evidence indicated a need for a general program of word skills which would apply to all the language arts, particularly reading and spelling, and opportunities for the use of words in meaningful situations.

An early examination of data revealed that a wide range of ability existed among the pupils and that their spelling needs were highly individual. However, there was a commonness of needs among three groups within the grade. There were the accelerated who needed enriched and extended experiences in the semantics of words; the so-called average group who needed a maintenance and continuing program in spelling; and the general verbal and linguistic retarded group who needed a program of word study skills applicable to all the language arts. Cutting across groups were pupils who needed specific

<sup>1</sup>Arthur I. Gates, Henry D. Rinsland, Ina C. Satorius, and Celeste C. Peardon, *The Pupils' Own Vocabulary Speller*, rev. ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950).

<sup>2</sup>James A. Fitzgerald, *A Basic Life Spelling Vocabulary* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1951).

<sup>3</sup>Edward W. Dolch, *Better Spelling* (Champaign, Ill.: The Garrard Press, 1942), pp. 257-270.

<sup>4</sup>Henry D. Rinsland, *A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1945), 636pp.

<sup>5</sup>*Gates-Russell Diagnostic Spelling Tests* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937).

help in the visual, auditory, speech, kinesthetic, and handwriting skills. All needed an opportunity to write in meaningful situations, and each pupil needed an opportunity to succeed at his level of achievement. Briefly, a functional child development approach to spelling was needed.

A functional approach to spelling required that opportunities be provided for writing in natural situations and that instruction be individualized. These conditions were provided for through the center of interest or functional activity unit in the content areas integrated with a unified language arts program.

The functional unit, or center of interest program, in the content areas was characterized by purposeful and satisfying pupil activities—group and individual—a balanced program of intensive and extensive reading, the development of language skills and abilities in social situations, a wise use of many aids to learning, the extension and enrichment of interests, and critical evaluation.

A unified language arts approach to spelling was made on the assumption that the child was integrated and that it was the purpose of the school to foster and maintain that integration. Test data indicated a wide range of language development among the pupils, ranging from the third grade through the eighth grade. This knowledge necessitated differentiation of instruction in terms of pupil achievement and needs.

Grouping of pupils was considered a part of an integrated language arts program. Three to four flexible groups were organized in terms of the instructional levels of the pupils. The instructional level

of spelling was synchronized with the reading level.

One of the main procedures for estimating achievement and needs in the group situations was the informal inventory in reading and spelling. These inventories were used for two main purposes. First, they provided a basis for grouping children in terms of their group needs; and second, they served as guides to the needs of the individuals in the group.

Other test data and teacher judgment were used to supplement the informal inventories in the grouping of pupils on levels of achievement. In general, there was little discrepancy among the various evaluation techniques.

Daily provision was made for spelling instruction using the textbook and the individual lists. Briefly, the plan of instruction using the textbook was the study-test plan for the retarded pupils and the test-study plan for the others.

Since the pupils were grouped for spelling instruction at the instructional level, the usual daily plan found in spellers of what to do on particular days of the week was disregarded. The group simply proceeded as rapidly as possible in the time allotted, usually fifteen to twenty minutes a day. For example, on any day a group of words could be presented in contextual setting as a reading lesson and the skill development exercises connected with those words completed on the same day.

The learning of the words in the individual list was considered the responsibility of the individual pupils. Provision was made for individual or small group study, usually pairs of similar levels or pairs of different levels, depending upon the activity and pupil choice of partner.

The studies of Russell<sup>6</sup> and others showed that multiple and complex instructional steps were cumbersome and boring for good spellers and confusing and ineffective for poor spellers. The method employed in this study eliminated all the steps but the vitally useful ones. There were only three steps employed which varied slightly to meet the requirements of longer words. These steps were:

1. Look at the word and say it softly. If it has more than one part (syllable) say it again, part by part, looking at each part as you say it.
2. Look at the letters and say each one. If the word has more than one part, say the letters part by part.
3. Write the word without looking at the book.

This method centered on intense, uninterrupted study and analysis of the word. If the pupil wrote the word correctly the first time, that was an indication he knew it. However, he was asked to write it a second and a third time to "stamp in" the correct reaction before the next word was taken up.

Words from the individual lists were studied in the same manner. The teacher checked with the individual pupils to determine whether the proper concepts and common meanings of the words had been established.

Research in spelling and child development indicated that periodic review on a long list of isolated words was a waste of time. Instead, it was commonly agreed that reviews become worthwhile when there was involved an opportunity for the child to make application of the generalizations, techniques, and principles being taught. It was the assumption in this study that in a classroom organized around functional units integrated with the language arts, and the use of a textbook series based on the Rinsland study, natural reviews were experienced daily.

#### Presentation and interpretation of data

Space does not permit the presentation of the numerous tables of data to support the conclusions. Table I, which is a partial summary of several detailed tables, shows two important facts. First, the spelling needs of children for any one writing situation are highly individual. The detailed tables from which this summary was made showed that the words misspelled most frequently were either repetition of errors by different pupils on "demon words" or repetitions of errors by the same child on a

<sup>6</sup>David H. Russell, *Characteristics of Good and Poor Spellers: A Diagnostic Study*. Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 272. (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937).

Table I

Total Different Words Misspelled, Errors, Individual Repetitions, and Occurrences in *Pupils' Own Vocabulary Spellers*, *Fitzgerald's List*, and *Dolch List* of 5,895 Running Words for January and 7,764 Words for June.

Date	Different Words Misspelled	Errors	Individual Repetitions By Same Pupil	Pupils' Own Vocabulary Spellers, Gr. I-V of 2,726 Words	Fitzgerald's List of 2,650 Words	Dolch List of 2,000 Words
Jan.	126	182	36	102 (81%)	101 (80%)	96 (76%)
June	155	234	53	121 (78%)	118 (77%)	110 (71%)

particular word. Second, the summary table indicates that with the exception of unusual words, proper nouns, derived forms, and words of low frequency of usage, the writing needs of the pupils are adequately met, for the most part, in the lists.

A comparison of the proportion of misspelled words in the spontaneous writings of the pupils in January and June showed a decrease in pupil errors of 0.2%. This, in itself, may seem insignificant. However, with the increased use of 1,869 words and the probability of error among writings of sixth grade pupils with as wide a range of ability as this group had, it is doubtful if the percentage of errors could have been reduced much more in a five-month period. It is interesting to observe, total running words in January, the pupils had already achieved a rather high level of proficiency. The further reduction of this to 3% seems significant when compared to scores made by pupils of similar published studies.

Authorities agree that one of the best measurements of achievement for a particular group is the informal inventory because it evaluates the pupils on materials which they have had an opportunity to learn. On the informal inventory in spelling, the pupils showed a mean gain of 1.3 grades during the five months period. It is interesting to note, also, that in January, fifteen pupils had an instructional level of second and third grade. By June this number was reduced to four, indicating much progress in the group which caused a majority of errors in the pupils' writings.

#### **Summary and conclusions**

The purpose of this study was: (a) to

determine the spelling needs of the pupils of a sixth grade class through classroom experimentation and research, and (b) to suggest procedures for spelling instruction to meet those needs by utilizing the implications of scientific investigation and expert opinion.

To determine the spelling needs of those pupils, four main sources of data were used: (1) standardized tests, (2) informal inventories in spelling and reading, (3) analysis of spelling errors in pupils' spontaneous writings, and (4) the research and theory in spelling and related areas.

Initial analysis of the above data indicated that the spelling abilities of the children varied widely and that the spelling needs of each child were highly individual. However, it was found that a core of approximately 2500 words made up about 95 per cent of the words which the children used in writing. Moreover, there were three groups of pupils within the total group who had similar levels of achievement and needs. To meet the needs of the pupils within these groups, spelling instruction was integrated with language arts.

To provide opportunities for using spelling in meaningful situations, instruction in the content areas was organized around the functional unit or experience approach.

Among the findings of this study, the following points seem to be most significant:

1. Spelling instruction, to be most effective, must be differentiated in terms of the needs of the group and of the individuals in the group.
2. Vocabulary knowledge is a more significant determinant of spelling success

than is intelligence, particularly in the elementary grades.

3. A general verbal and linguistic retardation is a major cause of poor spelling.

4. Most of the spelling errors which sixth grade children make in spontaneous writing are individual errors.

5. The spelling errors repeated most frequently are either errors repeated by different pupils, or individual repetitions by the same individual pupil.

6. The words needed for sixth grade children's spontaneous writing can be met, for the most part, by a reliable core list supplemented by individual word lists checked for frequency of occurrence with a valid list.

7. The use of a single textbook for all children in a class does not meet the needs of the pupils.

8. It cannot be assumed that mastery of spelling words and word attack skills have been achieved in previous grades.

9. The informal inventories in spelling and reading are effective aids in grouping of pupils on levels of ability.

10. Spelling ability is one of a constellation of language arts abilities that tend to reinforce each other.

11. The study test plan of instruction is an effective procedure in instructing

retarded or slow-learning pupils, and the test-study plan is an effective procedure for the accelerated pupils.

12. An analysis of children's spontaneous writings is an effective means for determining pupils' spelling needs.

13. Many pupils of the sixth grade have not developed an effective method of studying a word.

14. Incidental learning should be supplemented by direct systematic teaching, especially in the case of difficult words and words of high frequency of occurrence.

15. Children, working on levels of achievement and using spelling in meaningful situations, tend to have favorable attitudes toward spelling.

16. Adequate research, for all practical purposes, appears to be available for improved spelling instruction.

The final conclusion of the writer is that the needs of the pupils are adequately met in a curriculum organized as described in this study. Individual differences provide opportunities for rich living. In a democratic society these differences are regarded as assets.

### As the Twig Is Bent

A sixth-grader Charles Pendleton, at Storm Lake, Iowa, likes spelling "because you have to know how to spell if you're going to be a newspaperman." Charles may be the youngest newspaper publisher in the world. Since December, 1955, he has published a single-sheet weekly news called "The Pendleton Monitor" and hasn't missed an issue. He has 62 paying subscribers and sells ads for 5 cents an inch. Subscribers pay two cents a week. The paper has a column of local news, a column on foreign affairs, and "is loaded with ads." "The entire job takes about 5 hours," says the 11-year-old publisher. *Des Moines Sunday Register*, Nov. 18, 1956, submitted by Louise Hovde Mortensen.



## Do Teenagers Really Read Tab Books?

When we say, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," no one jumps to the conclusion that all the pudding must be eaten the instant it is taken from the stove in order to qualify for the goodness implied. Neither do we jump to the conclusion that a book must be read as soon as it is purchased when we say that the proof of a book is in the reading. With this rather simple analogy of pudding and books we turn for a brief appraisal of the relation between owning books and reading books.

Grades four to twelve in our small school have approximately 300 students who use a central library. The nearest public library is fifteen miles away and perhaps twenty-five or thirty miles from the homes of some of the pupils. Since our school library has about five books for each child, securing challenging, usable, and recreational reading material has, until recently, been a tremendous problem for teachers, students, and parents alike. Three years ago the Teenage Book Club was introduced to the students in an eighth grade English class, and it has since become so popular with all three interested groups that its importance can not be overestimated.

At the end of the first year the youngsters were so very happy with their reading that they clamored for a summer reading club. Nineteen of them, many working part time, read 150 books during that summer.

During the next year the eighth grade English teacher, who also taught fourth

grade, discovered a tremendous interest among her fourth grade nine and ten year olds in the Teenage Books. When she allowed them to examine a shipment of books, they begged for the privilege of buying them. When the teacher deliberately tried to discourage them, they overrode her advice. Dozens of books were bought and read avidly.

At the beginning of the third year there was so much interest shown in the Tab books that English Class 8B became the distribution center for all groups. Two girls elected by the class took complete charge of all the business of collecting the money, ordering the books, and distributing them without the least bit of work from the teacher.

At midterm, four and one half months after the initial interest in Tab books, this group had bought 606 books and was entitled to sixty-eight free ones. Since there was absolutely no pressure of any kind exerted on these youngsters to buy these books, this record seems to be a healthy sign that Johnny not only *can* read but *does*. Apparently many former comic-book dimes have been and are being used to purchase these books. How do we in this small school account for this interest in books and in reading?

First, many of the teachers have an enthusiastic interest in the books. The teacher of the class which acts as distribution center has her own personal library of perhaps 150 of these Tab books which

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Mrs. Stegall is a teacher in the Holliday, Texas, Public Schools.

have been accumulated over the past three years. When school begins in the fall, she carries dozens of them to class for her students to examine. Then she invites all who have further difficulty in finding a good book to come to her home to browse. Each youngster who comes is tremendously impressed with such an array of reading material that he goes home with one or more copies to examine at length. Never has such a child failed to read at least one of these books.

Second, this same teacher emphasizes only one reason for reading these books—for fun! The gun, the fishing rod, the tennis racquet, the skis, the bathing suit, and the books all fit into the same category of entertainment. But just as there is often a serious, a useful, and a practical side to sports, there is also a serious, a useful, and a practical side to books. A good swimmer might become a lifeguard. A good reader might become an interesting contributor of information to classroom discussion.

Third, as many students pass on from grade school, they frequently retain an interest in these books and ask to be allowed to continue to buy these books with the eighth graders. The books are often used to meet reading requirements in high school.

Fourth, parents each year become more fully aware of this inexpensive source of good reading. Their reaction is somewhat like that of a mother who recently said, "Why, those little old books the kids are reading are really good books. I have read several of them." Her son selected nine in the last order!

Fifth, interest in several of these Teenage Books has spread even to the Young

People's Department in one of the local churches. College students home for the holidays became interested in *Treasury of Inspiration* after hearing one of the stories in it given as a devotion. They left money to buy six copies of it in the next order. This book and several others will become "charter" members of a church library which is now in the planning stage.

The doubting Thomases and the cynics might, therefore, admit that youngsters do buy books, but in the same breath they will ask, do they read them?

A random check of books available for counting at this writing revealed these statistics:

Books purchased	387
Books read by purchasers	267
Books read by others	131

This is neither a scientific nor even an exact account of books purchased and read, but it is a careful estimate made from eight classes that use the books. The random check did show that the older students read more books than the younger ones did, which was as it should be. They are Teenage Books! The check also revealed that some of the children were buying books for gifts, and some were buying them to have on hand during the summer when they had more time to read.

Perhaps the proof of a book is in the reading, but truly a book in the hand is worth two in the store. Where there are so many books, there is bound to be a little reading. The Teenage Book Club is a boon to the teacher whose own love of books is so great that she is eager to share it with her students. Love begets love, and the love of books is indeed a great heritage which any teacher can leave to her students.

# Mispronunciation, Mistakes, and Method in Spelling<sup>1</sup>

Magazine and newspaper articles with such titles as "We Are a Nation of Poor Spellers"<sup>2</sup> (2) and "High School Youth Held Deficient in Spelling, Arithmetic, and Writing"<sup>3</sup> (13) abound in evidence that there is in the elementary school through college a general regression in the spelling habits of our school population. What is even more disconcerting is that this regression is in inverse proportion to the forward strides made in general education. In the teaching of spelling, apparently educators have been something like Dickens' Mr. Micawber, who, constantly "waiting for something to turn up, expected his bank account to balance automatically and everything to work out for the best."

The various explanations which have been advanced for spelling abilities and disabilities are suggestive but hardly convincing. In the case of such a restricted function as spelling, it is easy to demonstrate that spelling efficiency is not the exclusive possession of high or low intelligence, although it is equally certain that spelling ability is not so independent of native mental ability as some extremists would have us believe. In a summary of 140 studies with implications for possible causes of spelling disability, Spache concludes that "vocabulary knowledge is a more significant determiner of spelling success than intelligence, particularly in the first five grades . . . a low meaning vo-

cabulary is more likely to be a cause of spelling difficulty than is low reading ability"<sup>4</sup> (14, p. 575).

An analysis of the most common types of spelling errors leads us to the suspicion that various sensory and motor idiosyncrasies are the major determiners of performance, but which ones are crucial is as yet unknown<sup>5</sup> (5, p. 691).

## Mispronunciation and spelling

The purpose of this article, however, is not to point out the many slips that occur between the intention and fulfillment of the spelling program. Rather, the purpose is to note that pronunciation plays an important part in the learning of spelling, and to set up certain guideposts for establishing instruction in pronunciation as an integral part of the spelling program.

When the child enters school, he has a number of words which he can use in his endeavor to convey his thought through speech to someone other than himself. This number varies from 500 to 600 to as high as 1,500, and depends largely upon the environment in which the child has grown up. If he has had the advantages of city, country, and seashore life, his vocabulary should be correspondingly large. If he has lived most of his life in a back alley or across the tracks, his vocabulary will be

<sup>1</sup>This paper will appear as a section in a monograph, *Diagnostic and Instructional Procedures in the Language Arts*, which Dr. Furness, as co-author with Dr. Gertrude Boyd, will publish soon through the Curriculum and Research Center, University of Wyoming.

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small. The pronunciation of these words will be good, or poor, very largely as the pronunciation of his father, mother, and associates is good or poor<sup>5</sup> (10, p. 398). A child tends to spell as he speaks, and he brings to the spelling class many habitual and careless inaccuracies of speech which greatly increase the burden of the spelling teacher.

"The correct pronunciation of a word," wrote Horn, "is a very important factor in learning to spell it"<sup>6</sup> (7, p. 1254). In fact, mispronunciation is one of the commonest causes of the misspelling of words, according to Foran, who states further: "Several studies have been made to show the effect of correct pronunciation on spelling accuracy and there is abundant evidence to attest to its value"<sup>7</sup> (4, p. 92).

#### Mistakes based upon pronunciation

McEwen has classified spelling mistakes which are based upon pronunciation:

- (1) wrong vowel in accented syllable;
- (2) wrong vowel in unaccented syllable;
- (3) wrong consonant; (4) single consonant where consonant should be doubled;
- (5) unnecessary letter; (6) letters reversed; (7) vowel omitted; (8) consonant omitted (other than doubling); (9) syllable omitted; and (10) wrong word<sup>8</sup> (12, p. 217).

Numbers 1 and 2 are of use in ascertaining the correct accenting of vowel sounds; No. 3 draws attention to the distinctions between *c* and *s*, *sh* and *t*, *sch* and *sc*, and other consonant blendings; No. 6 is an error comparable to the spoonerism (e.g., a blushing crow for a crushing blow) and can be avoided by conscious attention to the consecutive sounds within a word; omissions of letters, represented by

Nos. 7, 8, and 9, also indicate failure to notice proper sound sequences or in some cases failure to recognize the function of a silent letter; No. 10 is necessary because of the many homonyms pronounced the same but spelled differently. Classroom use of such analysis, with its emphasis upon the connection between pronunciation and spelling, requires, like proof-reading, "a look inside the word"<sup>9</sup> (12, p. 217).

#### Method in spelling

Some years ago Winch found that a "direct" method of teaching spelling was superior to an "indirect" method which included writing the word on the blackboard, comments such as pointing out difficulties and giving meanings, use in oral sentences, and dictation in oral sentences. The "direct" method included: visual presentation from the board, pronunciation of the word by the teacher, pronunciation and oral spelling by the pupils, and writing the word on paper<sup>10</sup> (16, p. 592).

The practical suggestions that might be drawn from this somewhat abstract discussion are quite obvious:

1. Drill on the pronunciation of words is a valuable part of the daily spelling lesson and should precede the teaching of spelling<sup>11</sup> (11, p. 66). The teacher should articulate slowly, accurately, and distinctly the words carelessly pronounced, emphasizing the syllables of the word but not destroying the unity of the auditory image.

2. To be sure, spelling involves a knowledge of meaning of the word. However, knowledge of meaning is very far from being the sole determinant of error. Children spell correctly dozens of words

which they cannot define or use. In doing this they are guided by many factors—the sound of the word, the length of it, analogy with other words that resemble it. After listening attentively to the correct pronunciation of the word by the teacher—and after learning the meaning of the word—the children may pronounce the word in concert<sup>12</sup> (3, p. 46). Children whose pronunciation of common words deviates widely from the customary sounds, or who have speech articulation difficulties, need speech training and should be referred to a speech clinic<sup>13</sup> (6, p. 233).

3. The teacher should insist upon accurate enunciation of sounds of letters and combinations of letters in words, as children practice pronunciation individually or in groups. Whenever words are difficult for children both to pronounce and spell, it is advisable for the teacher to observe the children's pronunciation. And if the words are mispronounced, drill on the correct pronunciation usually will improve the spelling. The spelling instructor may demonstrate to the group differences in pronunciation of two words which may be confused such as *where* and *wear*, *quite* and *quiet*. Further, he should use in a sentence homonyms and words easily confused with other words: *two*, *Mary has two pencils*, *two*. Still further, the teacher must show the child how to recognize the sounds in a word and how to associate those sounds with the appropriate letter symbols, e.g., *beneficial*, *finally*, *government*, *handkerchief*, *particular*.

4. The term "syllable" is used to signify that part of a word which is uttered with a single impulse of the voice<sup>14</sup> (1,

p. 274). The syllable then is the real unit in pronunciation. The value of indicating the pronunciation of words by syllabication has been definitely determined; however, the evidence available seems to indicate that the value of syllabication in spelling is variable, depending upon the mental type and age of the individual learner. For example, Wolfe and Breed stated, "The superiority was more noticeable with the younger than with the older pupils"<sup>15</sup> (17, p. 622).

One of the most prolific writers on spelling, Willard Tidyman, has noted that many words—nearly all polysyllabic words—contain too many separate letters to be taken in by the eye at a single glance, as is necessary for a detailed and accurate mental picture. He notes too that the perception span is from three to five distinct objects. Therefore, the syllable is important in the learning process, since it makes possible a division of words into a number of perceivable units and at the same time makes possible a clear, definite, detailed picture of the letters<sup>16</sup> (15, p. 35).

This theory explains why syllabication is of less significance in the upper grades than in the early years of school life. The children with shorter perception spans tend to be among those who are eliminated; also, the perception span increases with maturity, training, and experience. This fact enables the more advanced children to deal with the difficult words. Instead of having to memorize the order of the distinct letters, they may learn three or four units and then combine these into a single word. Auditory images are brought in to reinforce visual and kinesthetic images<sup>17</sup> (1, p. 275).

Not only do we find the theory ten-



able, but also we know from various investigations that mature students, adults, and superior spellers do tend to study words by syllables. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful that a recent "big money" winner on television could have succeeded in spelling the word, *antidisestablishmentarianism*, without breaking it into syllables<sup>18</sup> (8, p. 291).

It is generally conceded that children in the fourth and succeeding grades may be taught to analyze pronunciation of words by use of the dictionary. The teacher should explain the diacritical markings in connection with the key to pronunciation in order to enunciate syllables and pronounce words correctly. In this connection we may note that dictionary training includes other skills and elements—alphabet, alphabetical order, division of dictionary into parts, guide words, key words, meanings (more than one meaning), syllabication and accents, synonyms, homonyms, antonyms, abbreviations, designations for verb, adjective, adverb, and noun<sup>19</sup> (9, p. 274).

If a pupil is to become successful in spelling, one of his tasks becomes that of acquiring basic skills of pronunciation—articulation, enunciation, and syllabication. In general, the teacher's task becomes not so much the development of pronunciation as the correction of mistakes in spelling and the use of appropriate teaching method to broaden the pupil's knowledge of words.

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## Books For The Jamestown Festival

But I thank God, we have not free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have these hundred years. For learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world; and printing has divulged them and libels against the government. God keep us from both.—Sir William Berkeley.

Thus wrote Sir William Berkeley to his home government in England in 1671 when he was Royal Governor of Virginia. But boys and girls now have exactly what Sir William did not wish them to have, and the year 1957, when the nation celebrates the Jamestown Festival on the Virginia peninsula, will be a good time to concentrate on books with a colonial background. The celebration will center on the historic sites of Jamestown, where the colonists erected the capital that served for nearly a century; Williamsburg, the second capital, where 18th century statesmanship flourished; and Yorktown, the picturesque port where the independence of the future United States was assured by Washington's victory over Cornwallis in 1781. April 26, 1957, will be the 350th anniversary of the colonists' arrival in 1607 in the three small sailing vessels, the *Godspeed*, the *Susan Constant*, and the *Discovery*.

Children's books of the period are *Fair Wind to Virginia* by Cornelia Meigs and *Three Ships Come Sailing* by Gilchrist Waring, *Jamestown Adventure* by Olga N. Hall-Quest, *Salute to Adventure* by John Buchan, *John Smith of Virginia* by Ronald Syme, *Pocahontas and Captain John Smith* by M. A. Lawson, *John of America* by D. L. McKaye, *Pocahontas* by the d'Aulaires, *Pocahontas* by Frances

Cavanah (Elf Book Series), and *Rebel Drums* by Nancy Faulkner, about a drummer boy who helped fight against the governor in Bacon's Rebellion in 1676.

English classes all over the nation may join in the Festival spirit by reading such books as *That Country Called Virginia* by Lena Barksdale, *Child Life in Colonial Days* and *Home Life in Colonial Days* by Alice Morse Earle, and Carolyn Bailey's books: *Children of the Handcrafts*, *Tops and Whistles*, *Homespun Playdays*, and *Pioneer Art in America*. *Is This My Love* by Gertrude E. Finney is the romance of a girl who goes from England on the famous Brides' Ship to Jamestown.

Boys and girls may be commissioned as library scouts to make a collection of colonial books. *Passage to America* by Katherine B. Shippen, especially chapters 1, 2, and 12, should be read. Most of all, we want to read books about the patriot leaders in the 18th century in books like *George Washington's World* and *George Washington* by Genevieve Foster, *When Washington Traveled* by Marion F. Lansing, and *George Washington, Leader of the People* by Clara Judson. *The Golden Stamp Book of George Washington* is fun. Patrick Henry, who is always remembered in Williamsburg, is the subject of *Give Me Liberty* by Hildegard Hawthorne and *Son of Thunder: Patrick Henry* by Julia M. Carson. *A Job for Jeremiah* by Eleanor Nolen is a picture of the Washingtons' family life at Mount Vernon seen through

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the story of a small servant on the plantation. *Washington, the Nation's First Hero* by Jeanette Eaton and *George Washington* by Elsie Ball are for younger readers.

The Marquis de Lafayette is the subject of *The Youngest General* by Fruma Gottschalk, *Young Lafayette* by Jeanette Eaton, and *Lafayette, Friend of America* by Alberta P. Graham.

*Lad of Old Williamsburg* by H. F. Orton, *A Spy in Williamsburg* by Isabelle Lawrence, *Erskine Dale, Pioneer* by John Fox, Jr., *Days of the Colonists* by Louise Lamprey, *Jack Ballister's Fortunes* by Howard Pyle, *Silver for General Washington* by E. L. Meadowcroft, *Emeralds for the King* by Constance Savery, *In the Days of Young Washington* by N. B. Turner, *The Silver Mace* by Maud and Miska Petersham, *Little Lost Kitten* by Mildred Comfort (Elf Book Series), and *St. George's Day in Williamsburg* by the Hurds are all books of the period.

Pirates as well as statesmen figured in the 17th and 18th centuries, and boys will include in their reading list books like *Pirate Quest* by Nancy Faulkner, which has Williamsburg scenes, *Pirate Island* by Fran Martin, laid in early Virginia and Carolina, *Captain Kidd's Cat* by Robert Lawson, which gives a cat's eye view of pirating in 1701; *The Dark Frigate* by Charles B. Hawes, Frank Stockton's *Buccaneers and Pirates of Our Coasts*, and *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates* by Phyllis R. Fenner.

The fact is that Dr. James Blair, founder of the College of William and Mary, made pirates help pay for his new college. After winning his charter from King William and Queen Mary, he helped raise his revenues by getting in touch with

several English pirates awaiting trial and persuading them to give the new college a cut of their loot if he secured their pardon and arranged lighter sentences.

Today, a summer course for teachers is offered at William and Mary College called "Workshop on American Life and Culture," and a 25-page pamphlet called *Readable Books about Early American History* is available from the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia (no charge).

Girls will want to read *Patsy Jefferson of Monticello* by Marguerite Vance and *Martha, Daughter of Virginia* by the same author. Children of today should know that Thomas Jefferson loved children. Left a widower with two daughters, Martha and Maria (his "Patty" and "Polly"), he saw both girls married at Monticello, and one of them, Martha Randolph, was obliged to make her home there with her family to care for her lonely father. His grandchildren and great grandchildren delighted him; he never had too many of them. *Thomas Jefferson* by Genevieve Listizky and *Thomas Jefferson, Champion of the People* by Clara Judson are distinguished books for children.

Some books laid in the Revolutionary period are *Red Sails on the James* by Leone Adelson, *Drums* by James Boyd, *Rebel Siege* by Jim Kjelgaard, and *The Crystal Cornerstone* by Lorna Beers. Our list should have not only books about the Virginia Colony, but also those about Old England, like *Merrylips* by Beulah M. Dix, laid in the days of the Cavaliers and the Roundheads, and *Pepys' Boy* by Rachel Varble about a boy in Restoration England who eventually emigrates to the New World. *Sir Walter Raleigh* by Nina Brown

Baker and *Sir Walter Raleigh* by Geoffrey Trease are written for children. Historians say that England in the 16th and 17th centuries was as absorbed in talk about Virginia as were the Eastern states in talk about the California Gold Rush of '49.

The poems about "Pocahontas" and "Thomas Jefferson" by Rosemary and Stephen Benet in their wonderful *Book of Americans* may be combined with famous sayings found in Robert Lawson's *Watchwords of Liberty* in a speaking program. Choral reading in *Let's-Read-Together Poems* for 8th grade (Row, Peterson) includes "Thomas Jefferson." Models may be built as suggested in *Historic Models of Early America* by C. J. Maginley.

Classes may put out an edition of *The Virginia Gazette*, which was originally printed in Williamsburg from 1736 until 1780. And a scrapbook of pictures and clippings may be made with blank pages in the back for names of books read during the year with signatures of the readers. A wall map may be copied from the pamphlet called "The Jamestown Festival." A

request to: The Jamestown Festival, The Travis House, Williamsburg, Virginia, will bring pamphlets and pictures for bulletin boards. Also, a request to the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce, 111 N. 5th Street, Richmond, Virginia, will bring the special Virginia issue of *Ford Times* (March, 1956) free to schools and libraries.

A traceable map of the Chesapeake Bay, following Captain John Smith's early explorations, is found in the *National Geographic* for September, 1939. The same magazine for October, 1954, has a Williamsburg article, as do the April, 1937, and June, 1953, numbers. The April, 1929, issue is a beautiful all-Virginia number with the story of Monticello. In the April, 1948, issue there is "Founders of Virginia," going back to the English ancestors who dreamed and planned. "History Keeps House in Virginia" is in the *National Geographic* for April, 1956, with a 10-color supplement map with descriptive notes that is ideal for school bulletin boards.

### Hyphenated Adjectives

*The Style Book of The New York Times* (1956 edition) instructs the copyreaders to hyphenate two or more words in adjective form, such as two-story house, corn-colored silk, etc. (Do not hyphenate color variations, such as navy blue skirt, dark green paint, light blue dress. Do not use a hyphen to connect an adverb ending in *ly* with a participle, in such phrases as: "a newly married couple; a magnificently furnished house.") Examples in the *Style Book* of such hyphenation are 12-year-old boy, five-day week, eight-hour day, two-family house, five-story building, seven-room house, eight-mile walk, sixty-mile gale, ten-ton truck, 5-cent piece, 10-cent fare, 18-hole course, able-bodied citizen, foreign-language newspaper.

A class exercise in forming hyphenated adjectives will bring out colorful pictures such as gray-green eyes, peach-colored silk, lemon-flavored pudding, copper-colored hair, grass-green paint, orange-brown maples, petunia-pink napkins, cream-colored woodwork, cherry-red ribbons, rose-red hat, rusty-brown branches, red-winged blackbird, ruby-throated hummingbird, or red-blooded boys. Or it will bring out identifying data such as one-dollar loan, ten-dollar interest, two-dollar debt, five-year plan, high-priced products.

Grammar classes might label a notebook *Style Book* and copy rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation on its pages with good examples, pretending their *Style Books* are to be used by proofreaders on a large newspaper.

# A Reconsideration of the Dale-Chall Formula

## I

The Dale-Chall formula for predicting readability is based primarily on word difficulty, but it does not consider words in terms of context, syntactical position, or grammatical structure—and secondarily on sentence difficulty. Since it measures only sentence length, it does not consider the most important factors in sentence difficulty. Furthermore, it does not pretend to evaluate the structure of the paragraph, or the organization of the content, or the difficulty of the subject matter. It is, then, nothing but a statistical device, having little to do with reading, and the only argument its proponents can stand on is that it correlates with actual reading difficulty. But does it? It will distinguish between *The Theory of the Leisure Class* and *Lad, A Dog*—but we knew this already. When meaningful distinctions between grades 4 and 5, or 5 and 6, or 4 and 6 must be made, or when a teacher wants to know if *Winesburg, Ohio* is really suitable for fifth grade readers, this formula is not better, in fact—if the reasoning of this article is correct—it is worse than nothing.

This is strong criticism. Nevertheless, an analysis of present day elementary-grade literature texts will supply sufficient evidence for it. Any one text may include stories that score from fourth grade to ninth or tenth grade, but if the stories had been accepted on the basis of their readability scores, the authors and editors would have had to discard everything that failed to measure up to the proper grade level. As a consequence, the texts would have been conspicuously lacking in stories that have always been considered essential. For example, traditional pieces from Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, Mother Goose, and Mark Twain (see the often used "Tom and the Painkiller") score too high for the elementary grades, and other

pieces (two of which I will consider later) score too easy.

Dr. Chall has written that "the use of readability formulas for determining the exact grade level of difficulty appears questionable,"<sup>1</sup> and hers is one among a number of general warnings against a mechanical application of readability formulas.<sup>2</sup> But in the case of making a seventh grade reader, a textbook publisher either accepts the results of the formulas and throws a number of good stories in the wastebasket, or he disregards the results and uses the stories that are judged appropriate by the combined experience, knowledge, and intelligence of his authors and editors. It may be argued that in the cases of stories scoring extremely high or low in readability, the authors and editors will have a sounder basis for discarding stories, but is there one such story that would escape the notice of any intelligent group of authors and editors? Actually, of course, if a textbook publisher is going to use readability formulas at all, he is hardly wrong in using them mechanically. The formulas are purportedly tools for objective measurement. They

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<sup>1</sup>Jeanne Chall, "The Measurement of Readability," *A Report of Tenth Annual Conference on Reading* (Pittsburg, 1954), p. 35. In the same article she writes: "The predicted grade level alone cannot tell whether the book is suitable for children of a given grade or reading ability. Other factors must be considered. . . ." I bring this up not just for the sake of pointing out minor inconsistencies, but to point out that perhaps even Dr. Chall is uncertain in her statements about the proper use of readability formulas.

<sup>2</sup>There are a number of such references in the pages of *The Tenth Annual Conference on Reading*, all of them generally referred to by Ruth I. Smith on p. 22 of the volume.



were devised in order to avoid the pitfalls of native intelligence. When the authors of the formulas tell us to use our native intelligence along with the formulas, they are, in essence, recommending a method that is contradictory in its terms. Moreover, if native intelligence has not been sufficient in the past, how is it to be of use now—when it has the added burden of conflicting with the results of the formulas? Finally, they are recommending a method that is not practicable for textbook publishers, who are, of course, businessmen and in no position to rely on native intelligence since their experience has been that the school people, who are their customers, are suspicious of publishers' opinions of their own books. School people want to see textbooks based solely on readability scores, not on readability scores as qualified by the application of native intelligence.

Another way publishers can—and do—use readability formulas is in editing manuscripts. If a manuscript scores too high they can go through it substituting words on the formula's word list for words not on the formula's word list and chopping in half all the long sentences. On the basis of the principles behind the formulas, this procedure cannot be reasonably opposed. But readability experts *do* oppose it as an improper use of the formulas.<sup>3</sup>

One more use which textbook publishers might find for these formulas is "determining the sequence in which books of varying content might be used in a reading program."<sup>4</sup> Used for just this purpose—that is, for arranging stories within a book—the Dale-Chall formula has proved, as I say, to be worse than nothing. For example, two stories which have appeared in textbooks are Jesse Stuart's "A Penny's Worth of Character" and Sherwood Anderson's "Stolen Day," and they measure out to scores of 4.58 and 4.70 respectively.<sup>5</sup> The problem was somehow to put these stories (and other good and appropriate stories of not quite so low a score) together with certain *Boy's Life* stories in an ascending order of difficulty. Perhaps the best

examples of the *Boy's Life* type of story are those by the ubiquitous B. J. Chute—he seems to be in everybody's text, which indicates his superiority over, but not his difference from, his colleagues in the juvenile-formula field—whose stories measure out to be more difficult than the great majority of stories in seventh and eighth grade reading texts. "Happy Daze," for example, rates a 6.3 score by the Dale-Chall formula, yet by no reasonable standard is it as difficult as the Stuart or Anderson stories. True, there are *words* in such stories as "Happy Daze" that are beyond the vocabulary level of many readers, but there is nothing in the *stories* beyond their comprehension. The reason for the high scores of such stories is obvious: they are formula stories, and it is perhaps almost axiomatic that writers of mechanically contrived stories seek "quality" through select vocabulary items. If this is true, it is fair to ask: What is it that the Dale-Chall formula does—measure the vocabulary level of readers, or the difficulty of stories?

As for the difficulty of the Stuart and Anderson stories—and they are not unusual examples of good stories for seventh and eighth graders—let me examine them as briefly as possible. Stuart's "A Penny's Worth of Character" is not difficult, but it is, in spite of its oversimplification of human experience (not, be it

"The Measurement of Readability," p. 36. Dr. Chall is of course quite right in warning against this use of the formulas. If the manuscript is well written in the first place, such methods of simplifying are only superficial. The reasoning behind this warning, however, if consistently followed, would warrant abandoning the readability formulas altogether.

<sup>4</sup>Roy A. Kress, "Finding Readable Materials for Remedial Reading," *A Report of the Tenth Annual Conference on Reading*, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup>A score of 4.9 or below indicates fourth grade or below; 5.0-5.9 indicates grades 5 to 6; 6.0-6.9 indicates grades 7 to 8; and so on. Because these two stories, every word in each story—not these two stories every word in each story—not just a sample—was counted.

noted, to make the story understandable for children, but to produce the moral at the end) a very serious story involving real human beings. This seriousness (a problem of ethics, forgiveness, and learning through experience) coupled with character depth (human insights and motivations) quite obviously makes the content of the story more difficult than any of the *Boy's Life* stories textbook editors are sometimes required to wade through.

"Stolen Day" may be called a simple story, but like most good simple stories, there is more in it than some people will ever see—it is simple only on the surface. Told in the first person, about a very young boy, the story contains extremely short sentences and a very light vocabulary load (in the whole story there are 40 instances not on the Dale-Chall word list, but only 14 different words—"inflammatory rheumatism" accounting for 22 of the instances), but it would be quite erroneous to maintain that this story is even stylistically easy. (This writer knows one author of a textbook, a teacher of reading, who maintained that it was very poorly written.) In addition, the story demands some understanding of what we call psychosomatic illness and an intelligent sensitivity to a child's response to experience. However, because of the low vocabulary load and because of the short sentences, this story is, according to the Dale-Chall formula, easy to read.<sup>6</sup>

From this picture of how textbooks are made, it is clear that readability formulas are not serving the purpose they were intended to serve. This in itself is not so much a criticism of the textbook publishers—except in so far as it points out their failure to participate critically in the development of our educational methods—as it is a criticism of the impracticability of our present-day readability formulas. As a result, artificially and falsely measured reading material is foisted off on our schools. It is of course possible for textbooks to be satisfactory *in spite of* readability formulas, but the implicit theory of readability that lies

behind these mechanical devices for measurement is calculated to do immeasurable harm to our concepts of language and literature and, in so far as education depends on communication, to our principles and methods of education as well.

## II

The assumptions behind the Dale-Chall formula are: (1) that the shorter the sentence, the more simply organized are the concepts and contents, and (2) that words in isolation are identical with words ordered into linguistic and conceptual structures. As for concepts and content, it has been shown in the first part of this paper that the Dale-Chall formula does not attempt to measure subject matter. Whether the material consists of the theory of relativity or the tale of Jack and Jill makes no difference. Since the formula measures sentence length, it does claim that content is simply organized if the sentences are short. But sentence length is only one of many factors in organization. When linguists speak of the organization of the English sentence, they speak of the arrangements of subject, verb, object, etc. The simplest Eng-

"For lists of stories and their readability scores, the reader is referred to *A Report of the Tenth Annual Conference on Reading*. James C. Craig's article (pp. 113-125), for example, is made up of lists based on the Yoakum formula (vocabulary alone). But there is little difference in the results. One might ask such questions as: How is an eighth grade teacher to select from these lists a good reading program for her class? Won't she do better if she uses her common sense? If the formula is not meant to serve so precise a purpose—as Mr. Craig carefully says—what purpose is it to serve? Does it tell us which books are easier than others? Is Pope's *Essay on Man* really the easiest poem on the list? Is Riley's *The Old Swimmer's Hole* and *Leven More Poems* easier than *Paradise Lost*? Concerning this, what conclusion is to be drawn from Mr. Craig's admission: "If it be true that vocabulary difficulty and reading ability are highly correlated, then one must conclude that the children for whom Riley wrote were very precocious readers?"

lish sentence, the one most natural to the modern ear, is subject followed by verb followed by object. Because its parts of speech appear in this common arrangement, "John chose candy" is an example of the simplest sentence in English. The shorter sentence "John chose" is more difficult because it normally requires the reader to adjust in some way to the absence of an object. Likewise, a reversal of the order is more difficult because it is less common. The sentence "Candy John chose" requires the reader to adjust his set response to the common English sentence. This example of reversed order is not very familiar to our ears, but if the verb is made transitive and the object an adverbial objective ("Home went John"), the reversal is not unusual. There are, of course, innumerable enlargements and variations of this simple sentence ("Smiling at last, for here was Mary's mother with the box of candy, John chose the chocolate cream he had been wanting for the past half hour"), and these make it clear that sentence length often does indicate degree of difficulty. On the other hand, a long sentence may be both lucid and simply arranged (subjective, verbal, objective), and a short sentence may demand more inference or more attention because of complexity of arrangement. Furthermore, because of the nature of meaning, material can be built up so that a two word sentence ("John chose") can have much more meaning (and therefore difficulty) than one infinitely more complicated structurally. Is this not what Shakespeare does when at the end of the play *King Lear* says "Pray you undo this button"?

But with a conscientious try, pupils can usually unravel the organization of a sentence. It is with the larger units, the units reading formulas do not pretend to measure, that organization becomes really difficult. After the sentence, we usually consider the paragraph as the next larger unit and, indeed, when we teach reading and writing, we try to explain the basic principles of paragraph organization. Pupils are

taught to look for a topic sentence toward the beginning of the paragraph and then, in the rest of the paragraph, to find the orderly development of this topic. Such is the simplest way to arrange a paragraph. But writers (sometimes properly and sometimes improperly) do not always write this way. When a paragraph has no topic sentence, when it is badly organized, when its principle of organization is something else—which can be grasped, it may be, only in terms of a larger whole—then the reading becomes truly difficult. But the Dale-Chall formula does not recognize such problems in reading.

Finally, what about the organization of a chapter, of a story, of a whole novel? To take an extreme example for illustration, is not *Remembrance of Things Past*, in terms of organization alone, fantastically more difficult than any ordinary autobiography?

These elements of organization are basic to reading difficulty. They are to a degree quantitative and therefore, to a degree, measurable. (For example, would it be possible to allow a different constant for each of four or maybe five degrees of difficulty?) Naturally, an additional measurement takes more time; it makes the formula more complicated; it introduces to a degree the factor of analyst reliability; and it will make the formula less popular. But at least reading experts should devise an expert tool, a thorough-going formula, just to see what happens. Even if teachers and publishers refuse to use it, the experts will find it a valuable instrument for correlating the easy-to-use formulas.

The total of difficult words, which is the second and only other factor in readability according to the Dale-Chall formula, assumes that words have only one assignable meaning and that words are understood in isolation from contextual, syntactical, and grammatical elements. In other words, this formula defines reading as "a process of recognizing printed or written symbols," which is, in fact, how reading

was defined in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> For a number of decades, however, we have accepted a broader view of reading, one that "involves the recognition of the important elements of meaning in their essential relations. . . . This definition, while implying a thorough mastery of word recognition, attaches major importance to thought-getting."<sup>8</sup> In other words, our definition of reading is truer to the nature of the process involved than our grandfathers' because ours is based on the purposes and ends of reading (thought-getting) and takes into account the numerous factors that enter into the reading act.

Actually, of course, this old-fashioned theory of reading that survives in the readability formulas just makes no sense. One of the achievements of our "age of analysis" has been the philosophical and linguistic analysis of meaning. It is no longer possible to accept words (let alone things) as static and fixed quantities. Words have meaning only in a linguistic and conceptual environment. Extremists are perhaps not far wrong in claiming that one word never means the same thing twice. But one does not have to be an extremist to appreciate the modern view. For example, even most easy words will have a number of meanings, some of which will be familiar, or easy, while others will be unfamiliar. In addition, every word appears in a context which will affect its meaning. Then, triple confounding, a word in its familiar meaning may yet be used in a sentence so that it will not be readily understood. Or a word in its unfamiliar meaning may be used so that it is understood. Take the word "head," for which the *Thorndike-Century Junior Dictionary* gives eighteen separate meanings and three idioms, assigning it a word frequency count of 1. (And by the way, wouldn't Thorndike's list become meaningful if each *meaning* of the word were given a frequency count? Each of these eighteen meanings does not certainly have a frequency count of 1.) But according to the Dale-Chall list, which of the meanings of the word is in-

volved doesn't matter; whether or not the word is used figuratively doesn't matter; the context of the word doesn't matter; the grammatical use of the word doesn't matter; the syntactical position of the word doesn't matter; it doesn't even matter if "head" is used as a noun or a verb—it is just familiar. And what are we to think of idiomatic expressions? Is the phrase "over his head" familiar to fourth graders since each of these words is on the list?

If the picture presented here is true, the method of word counting used by the readability formulas shows no awareness of the nature of language. This statement, which is given without qualification, may appear extreme, but consider further the rules that are given for counting. According to the only rule for counting hyphenated words (other types of compounds are not mentioned, although the word list apparently includes those that are familiar), hyphenated words are counted unfamiliar if one of the two elements does not appear on the list. This rule exists in spite of the fact that at least one of the elements of a compound may change in meaning (man-of-war, high-hat) and the fact that many compounds lose their hyphens *when* they become familiar. Thus "cool-headed" would be familiar according to the rules, but "coolheaded" would not. "Blackbird" is on the list but "boathouse" is not—however, if it were written "boat-house" it would, strangely, become familiar.

The rule for adverbs is "Consider adverbs familiar which are formed by adding *-ly* to a word on the list. . . . Count as unfamiliar words which add more than *-ly*, like *easily*." This rule ignores the fact that part of the meaning of adverbs is keyed by (1) their endings and (2) their position in the sentence. In the sentences "Easy does it" and "He did it easily" the mean-

<sup>7</sup>William S. Gray, "The Nature and Types of Reading," *National Society for the Study of Education*, 36th Year Book (Bloomington, 1937), p. 25.

<sup>8</sup>*Loc. cit.*

ing of the adverb is certainly less likely to be misconstrued than the meaning of the substantive. The reason for this is that the substantive has a kind of floating area of meanings, any one of which—depending on the context—will be appropriate, but the meaning of the adverb—indicated by the *-ily* ending—is restricted to expressing *how* he did it.

The rule for adjectives states that *-y* endings are unfamiliar unless specifically listed (other types of adjectives are not mentioned, and of the *-able* endings *valuable* is the only word listed). As with adverbs, this rule disregards important structural elements in meaning—word endings and position. Professor C. C. Fries has demonstrated the significance of these structural elements by analyzing the poem "Jabberwocky" ("Twas brillig, and the *slithy* toves. . .").<sup>9</sup> It is evident that when a reader comes upon a strange word which, nevertheless, he recognizes by one of the structural signs as a modifier he has already gained much of its meaning (The marsh weeds' *slithy* texture), and it is quite possible that the context will provide enough for an adequate definition of the term, as well as comprehension of the sentence.

Modern scholarship in linguistics, philosophy, and literary criticism has emphasized the rich linguistic and conceptual environment of words. In such light, word lists used for

counting familiar and unfamiliar words are literally meaningless. And it is, therefore, indeed time to turn to the "qualitative aspects" of reading.<sup>10</sup> In fact, according to the argument of this paper, we should have begun there. If we had, we would be in possession of fewer and less conclusive analyses of the readability of everything from the Congressional Record to Mickey Mouse, but our knowledge would be sound. Perhaps of more value than anything else, our teachers of reading would have been indirectly led by these studies toward a real appreciation of reading problems, instead of toward an oversimplified and superficial appreciation encouraged by the mechanical approach of our present readability formulas.

In conclusion, then, if it is true that the proponents of readability formulas can make no stronger case than that reflected by their hopeful and ambiguous statements about correlation,<sup>11</sup> they must face the facts: at present, we have no way to measure reading difficulty, and what we need is a good way, not an easy way. When we have a good way—an accurate formula to use for correlation purposes—it will be time enough to cast about for the easy way.

<sup>9</sup>C. C. Fries, *The Structure of English* (New York, 1952), pp. 70-71.

<sup>10</sup>"The Measurement of Readability," p. 36.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37.

## Reply

We hope that the following comments will clear up some of Mr. Dawkin's misconceptions about the Dale-Chall formula.

1. The Dale-Chall formula does give evidence of the relative hardness of printed and spoken material. The following evidence is available in the literature:

It correlates .7 with children's comprehension of varied general reading materials

(McCall-Crabbs passages), .9 with teachers' judgments of difficulty of health and social studies materials, and .9 with comprehension of health education materials by children and adults.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability: Instructions," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVII (February, 1948), 37-54.

EDGAR DALE  
AND  
JEANNE S. CHALL



The Dale-Chall scores correlated .7 with listeners' understanding of newscasts,<sup>2</sup> and correlated positively with teachers' judgments of difficulty of geography textbooks.<sup>3</sup>

In a controlled experiment, it was found that simpler versions (Dale-Chall scores of seventh-eighth grade) of articles of similar content (Dale-Chall, eleventh-twelfth grade) were comprehended significantly better by readers of similar reading ability.<sup>4</sup>

The Dale-Chall formula was also found to have the best agreement of six formulas (Lorge, Flesch, Yoakam, Winnetka, and Lewerenz) with grade levels assigned by children's librarians to 12 popular juvenile books. The Dale-Chall grade levels deviated an average of .47 of a grade from the librarians' ratings. Eleven of the 12 books were rated within one grade of the librarians' judgments. The same study also found the Dale-Chall scores to correlate highest with the readability scores from the other formulas.<sup>5</sup>

For additional experimental evidence of the validity of the Dale-Chall and other readability formulas, the reader is referred to the following sources: "Developing Readable Materials" by Dale and Chall,<sup>6</sup> Klare and Buck *Know Your Reader*,<sup>7</sup> and Chall's forthcoming book, *Readability: An Appraisal of Research and Application*.<sup>8</sup>

2. Although the formula does give evidence of the relative hardness of material, it surely has no power to tell a publisher what he should do with the findings. The use of a formula does not assume that difficult material should be simplified, although some people have mistakenly interpreted readability measurement to mean that all material must be made easy. No objective tool should bear the responsibility for its unintelligent use.

Criteria for selecting and writing materials suitable for different groups are treated in various articles and in Dale and Chall's "Techniques for Selecting and Writing Readable Materials."<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Dawkins quotes Jeanne Chall as saying: "The use of readability formulas for determining the exact grade level of difficulty appears questionable" (p. 35). Mr. Dawkins quoted correctly, but he quoted too little. The above statement followed a review of the evidence on validity from many formulas (there are now about 29 formulas, although Mr. Dawkins ignores this fact). It also followed an analysis of studies comparing the grade scores from various formulas on the same materials. Because of the discrepancies found among the grade scores from several formulas, and in view of the limited research, it was suggested that

<sup>2</sup>Jeanne S. Chall and Harold E. Dial, "Predicting Listener's Understanding and Interest in Newscasts," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVIII (September, 1948), 141-53, 168.

<sup>3</sup>A. E. Tubbs, "Assessing the Suitability of Geography Textbooks," *Proceedings, British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1950. Cited by P. E. Vernon, "An Investigation into the Intelligibility of Educational Broadcasts. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, November, 1950 (mimeographed). pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup>Charles E. Swanson and Harland G. Fox, "Validity of Readability Formulas," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, XXXVII (April, 1953), 114-118.

<sup>5</sup>David H. Russell and Henry R. Fea, "Validity of Six Readability Formulas as Measures of Juvenile Fiction," *Elementary School Journal*, LII (November, 1951), 136-44.

<sup>6</sup>Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "Developing Readable Materials," *Adult Reading*. The 55th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1956.

<sup>7</sup>George R. Klare and Byron Buck, *Know Your Reader*. New York: Hermitage House, 1954.

<sup>8</sup>Jeanne S. Chall, *Readability: An Appraisal of Research and Application*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press (in press).

<sup>9</sup>Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "Techniques for Selecting and Writing Readable Materials," *Elementary English*, XXVI (May, 1949), 250-58; also in *Readability* (edited by Edgar Dale), Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, 8-16.

until further evidence is accumulated, we should exercise the kind of caution which Mr. Dawkins favors when it is based on his experience, but not when based on "mere statistical" evidence.

The fuller and more meaningful statement referring to the validity of readability formulas follows:

From the cross-validation studies we can conclude that using a formula for estimating relative difficulty is justifiable. However, the use of a readability formula for determining the exact grade level of difficulty appears questionable. More research is needed to adjust the grade scores of various formulas to tested difficulty and to the grade scores of other formulas. In the meantime, wide experience with a formula, together with observations of the use of the material checked for difficulty, will help the user estimate whether the predicted grade levels are adequate for practical purposes.<sup>10</sup>

3. The writers have warned against interpreting the factors in our formula as causative; yet Mr. Dawkins insists on doing so. We state again as we have in other articles, and as the research indicates, that mechanically shortening sentences and mechanically substituting easy words for hard ones are not the answers to improving readability.

4. We reject completely the assumptions attributed to the formula which Mr. Dawkins makes in Part II. We reject the definition of reading which Mr. Dawkins attributes to us . . . "a process of recognizing printed or written symbols." If Mr. Dawkins has read what we have written on this subject, he knows differently. He will recall that in our first article presenting the formula<sup>11</sup> we called the reader's attention to the fact that the formula does not take into account simple words used in a rare sense.

Regarding the multiple meaning of words, Mr. Dawkins will find our caution about this in almost every article we have written. It might also be appropriate to remind Mr. Dawkins that his wish for a count of the frequency of mean-

ings of words, rather than mere frequency of forms of the word, was answered by Lorge and Thorndike in 1938 in their semantic count.<sup>12</sup>

5. Mr. Dawkins' thoughts about organization are in agreement with our findings and those of others. He has presumably read what we have written on this. It is unfortunate, though, that he missed the article by Lorge in this journal, "Readability Formulae: An Evaluation"<sup>13</sup> in which the author showed that the better readership resulting from a revision of an article (lower readability score) was probably the result of a change in the organization rather than the difference in the readability formula factors (affixes and sentence length).

We have felt organization to be so important that we made it the first principle in *Some Suggestions for Writing Health Materials*.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Dawkins says that "school people want to see textbooks based solely on readability scores, not on readability scores as qualified by the application of native intelligence." No evidence is presented, and this has not been our experience. If they want this, it will be because they have rejected the advice of those responsible for readability formulas.

<sup>10</sup>Tenth Reading Conference, University of Pittsburgh, 1954.

<sup>11</sup>Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability: Instruction," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVII (February, 1948), 37-54.

<sup>12</sup>Irving Lorge and E. L. Thorndike, *A Semantic Count of English Words*. New York: Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938.

<sup>13</sup>Irving Lorge, "Readability Formulae: An Evaluation," *Elementary English*, XXVI (February, 1949), 86-95; also in *Readability* (edited by Edgar Dale), Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, 8-16.

<sup>14</sup>Edgar Dale and Hilda Hager, *Some Suggestions for Writing Health Materials*. Prepared for National Tuberculosis Association. Available only from Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

## A Seventh Report on TV

In 1949 and 1950, TV came to Evanston and the Chicago area. By May 1950, 43 per cent of our school children reported that they had TV sets at home. The percentages increased in subsequent years to 68 in 1951, 88 in 1952, and in 1953, 92. In 1955 and in 1956, 97 per cent of the pupils had TV sets at home, and some had two or more sets. Thus, TV is now available to almost all boys and girls.

Each year since 1950, the writer has studied the reactions to TV of approximately 2000 elementary and high school pupils, their teachers, and their parents. The results of these studies have been reported each year in *Elementary English*. In May 1956, about 2500 elementary school pupils in Chicago answered a questionnaire concerning TV as did their parents and their teachers. In some schools, the validity of the children's responses was studied through interviews. In 1956, 400 students from the Evanston Township High School also provided information concerning the amount and nature of their televiewing.\*

### Amount of Televiewing

In 1950, many people believed that televiewing might be a passing fancy and that the amount of time devoted to TV would drop sharply after the novelty of the activity had worn off. That this prediction has not been realized may be seen from the results of our studies, which show that children now actually spend as much or more time, on the average, viewing TV than they did during the period when TV offered a new experience for them. In 1950, the elementary school pupils spent 21 hours each week with TV; in 1951, the average was 19 hours. There was a slight in-

crease during the next two years—to 23 hours of televiewing each week by the elementary school pupils in 1953. In 1954, the average was 21.5 hours per week, and, in 1955, 23.7 hours per week. In 1956 the average was 21 hours. The average for high school pupils was 14 hours in 1954 and 1955, and 12 in 1956.

In 1950, the parents spent 24 hours on the average each week in televiewing, about 20 hours in 1951, 19 hours in 1953, 16 hours in 1954, 21.2 hours in 1955, and 17 hours in 1956.

Teachers continue to spend less time with TV than do the children or their parents. In 1951, the teachers' average was about nine hours per week; in 1953, 12; in 1954, 11.5; and in 1955, 12.5 hours; in 1956 the average was about the same as in 1955.

This study shows that TV has maintained its popularity. Televiewing is the favorite leisure activity of elementary school pupils who persist in spending upwards of 20 hours per week in this activity. High school pupils devote much less time to TV, averaging about 12 to 14 hours per week.

### Some results of TV

In several studies it became clear that the amount of televiewing is not related closely to intelligence or to scholarship. Excessive viewing of TV, however, seems to be associated with somewhat lower academic attainment. Although TV does not, on the whole, appear to influence educational attainment markedly, teachers and parents report undesirable effects in individual cases. On the other hand, there are children who have been stimulated to do better work because of interests engendered by TV.

In 1950, behavior and adjustment problems were associated with TV by about half of the teachers and one-third of the parents; in 1953,

\*The writer of this article is grateful to Dr. Don Rogers, Chicago Public Schools, Dr. Lloyd Michael of the Evanston Township High School, and to teachers and administrators in both cities for assisting in this study.

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by 28 per cent of the teachers and 30 per cent of the parents; in 1954, by 30 per cent of the teachers and 39 per cent of the parents; in 1955, by 30 per cent of the teachers and 36 per cent of the parents. In 1956 the percentages were 38 by teachers and 37 by parents. The problems included neglect of homework, meal-time disturbance, increased nervousness, fatigue, impoverishment of play, disinterest in school, reduction in reading, and eye-strain.

Since 1950, teachers in the writer's classes have made investigations of the children in their own classes who spent extremely large amounts of time televiewing. Some of the children were problem cases, but others were well-adjusted, successful students. In every case of maladjustment, factors such as poor home conditions, lack of interest, unfortunate experience, and others seemed to contribute to the child's difficulties. TV alone could not be held responsible for undesirable behavior. Thus, it seems that an appraisal of the desirability or the undesirability of televiewing can be made only through a complete case study of each child.

Parents and teachers indicated that many children read less than they did before TV. In 1955, 43 per cent of the pupils stated that they read less; 45 per cent, more; and 12 per cent the same amount. In 1956, the pupils were about equally divided in their answers to the amount of reading they now do. About half said they read more, while the other half reported that they read less than before TV. Of course many children now have had TV as long as they can remember, and hence could not respond to this inquiry about reading.

#### Ranks of favorite programs

Changes have taken place in the ranks of favorite programs, and many new programs have become popular. In 1950 the favorite programs of the children included: *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Howdy Doody*, *Lone Ranger*, *Milton Berle*, *Arthur Godfrey*, and *Small Fry*. Changes occurred rapidly, and new favorites appeared.

In 1952, *I Love Lucy* became the best-liked program of boys and girls, and *My Friend Irma* and *Roy Rogers* were also highly endorsed. And in 1953, *Superman*, *Red Buttons*, and *Dragnet* found their way toward the top of the list. But *I Love Lucy* remained in first place. In 1954, the elementary school pupils liked these programs best: *I Love Lucy*, *Dragnet*, *My Little Margie*, *Roy Rogers*, *Topper* and *Superman*.

In 1955, acclaim came to *Disneyland*, and *Rin-Tin-Tin* and *Lassie* became very popular too. *I Love Lucy*, the former favorite, dropped to fourth place. In 1956, similar ratings were reported. (See Table I). *Disneyland* has first rank, *I Love Lucy*, third. Table II presents the preferences of junior high school pupils. It may be seen that *Science Fiction Theater* occupies first place and *Disneyland*, fourth. *I Love Lucy* occupies third place this year.

TABLE I  
*Children's Best-Liked TV Programs*

1. Disneyland
2. Mickey Mouse Club
3. I Love Lucy
4. Rin Tin Tin
5. Lassie
6. Fury
7. Mighty Mouse
8. Little Rascals
9. Science Fiction Theater
10. Father Knows Best

TABLE II  
*TV Preferences of Junior High School Pupils*

1. Science Fiction Theater
2. Bandstand Matinee
3. I Love Lucy
4. Disneyland
5. Lassie
6. \$64,000 Question
7. Father Knows Best
8. Baseball and Other Sport Programs
- 9.5. Warner Brothers Present
- 9.5. Dragnet

The preferences of high school students changed. *Arthur Godfrey*, an early favorite, remained among the top five programs preferred by high school students in 1953, with *I Love*

*Lucy* in first place. In 1954 the high school students in Chicago and Evanston preferred the following: *I Love Lucy*, *Dragnet*, *I Led Three Lives*, *This Is Your Life*, *Colgate Comedy Hour*, *Jackie Gleason*, and *Liberace*. In 1955, *George Gobel* was given first place, followed closely by *Disneyland*, then *Toast of the Town*, *Medic*, *Dragnet*, and *I Love Lucy*. In 1956, *Baseball and other sport programs*, *Toast of the Town*, and *Perry Como Show* led the list. Table III presents the favorites.

TABLE III  
TV Preferences of High School Pupils

- 
1. Baseball and Other Sport Programs
  2. Toast of the Town
  3. Perry Como Show
  4. Alfred Hitchcock
  5. \$64,000 Question
  6. Disneyland
  7. Sergeant Bilko
  8. Medic
  9. I Love Lucy
  10. Science Fiction
- 

In 1950, *Arthur Godfrey* and *Milton Berle* were extremely well liked by the parents. In 1953, *I Love Lucy* attained first rank, followed by *What's My Line?* and *Omnibus*; *Arthur Godfrey* remained in the list with fourth rank. The 1954 favorites were: *I Love Lucy*, *This Is Your Life*, *See It Now*, *What's My Line?*, *Kraft TV Theater*, and *Arthur Godfrey*. In 1955, these were the best liked programs; *Person to Person*, *Medic*, *This Is Your Life*, *Disneyland*, and *I Love Lucy*. In 1956, *Person to Person* dropped, and *I Love Lucy* went back to first place. (See Table IV.)

TABLE IV  
Favorite TV Programs of Parents

- 
1. I Love Lucy
  2. \$64,000 Question
  3. Lawrence Welk
  4. Disneyland
  5. Toast of the Town
  - 6.5. Perry Como Show
  - 6.5. George Gobel
  8. Person to Person
  9. Baseball and Other Sport Programs
  10. What's My Line?
- 

Only 25 per cent of the teachers had TV sets in 1950. An increase in TV ownership gradually raised the percentage until in 1956 it was 92. *What's My Line?* appeared as the first choice in 1951 and continued as a favorite in 1952, 1953, and 1954. The teachers showed less enthusiasm for *I Love Lucy* than did their pupils and the parents during the years 1952 to 1956. However, some were attracted to this program. In 1953, popular programs of the teachers included: *Meet the Press*, *Omnibus*, *News*, *What's My Line?*, and *Mr. Peepers*. The teachers' preferences in 1954 were: *What's My Line?*, *Kraft TV Theater*, *Fred Waring Show*, *Person to Person*, and *Omnibus*. In 1955, this was the order of preference: *Life Is Worth Living*, *Person to Person*, *What's My Line?*, *Omnibus*, and *I Love Lucy*. In 1956, *The \$64,000 Question* shared first with *What's My Line?* (See Table V.)

TABLE V  
Favorite TV Programs of Teachers

- 
- 1.5. \$64,000 Question
  - 1.5. What's My Line?
  3. Life Is Worth Living
  4. Toast of the Town
  5. Wide, Wide World
  6. Our Miss Brooks
  8. Voice of Firestone
  8. Kraft Playhouse
  8. Channel 11
  - 11.5. Meet the Press
  - 11.5. Groucho Marx
  - 11.5. This Is Your Life
  - 11.5. Robert Montgomery Presents
- 

#### Disliked and desired programs

The children placed *Howdy Doody* and *Milton Berle* at the top of the list of disliked programs in 1952. *Westerns*, *Murder Mysteries*, and *Milton Berle* were in disfavor with parents and teachers. In 1953, the children cited *Howdy Doody*, *Westerns*, *Milton Berle*, and *Captain Video* as unpopular programs, and their parents indicated strong antipathy to *Murder Mysteries* and *Crime Programs*. *Westerns*, *Milton Berle*, and *Old Movies* followed in the disliked list. In 1954, similar programs were disliked by the



children—among them *Howdy Doody*, *News*, and *Captain Video*. In 1955, these were children's disliked programs: *Howdy Doody*, *Medic*, *Arthur Godfrey*, *Boxing*, and *News*. The children said they found their favorite programs displaced by such presentations as *Medic* and *News*.

The parents and teachers in 1954 expressed a common dislike for *Westerns* and *Crime Programs*, *Wrestling*, and *Milton Berle*. In 1955, parents and teachers indicated a dislike for: *Westerns* and *Crime Programs*, *Arthur Godfrey*, *Milton Berle*, *Wrestling*, *Old Movies*. The following programs were reported as disliked by the children in 1956: *Howdy Doody*, *Boxing*, *News*, *Baseball*, and *Arthur Godfrey*. (See Table VI.) The parents and teachers expressed a dislike for *Westerns* and *Crime Programs*, *Wrestling*, *Milton Berle*, and *Old Movies*.

TABLE VI  
*Children's Disliked TV Programs*

- 
1. Howdy Doody
  2. Boxing
  3. News
  - 4.5. Baseball
  - 4.5. Arthur Godfrey
  6. Happy Pirates
  7. Westerns
  8. Pinky Lee
  9. Elmer the Elephant
- 

In 1955 and again in 1956, teachers and parents reported that they would like to see more educational programs that would stimulate children to read. They pointed out the desirability of arranging schedules so that more superior programs for children might be viewed during the early evening hours. They stressed, too, the necessity for discrimination in the choices among current offerings. Some parents reported that family councils have been most effective in improving habits of tele-viewing. The teachers cited a number of examples of the successful use of TV in fostering interest and engendering successful work in school. Some teachers mentioned the greater

interest of high school students in science, in current events, and in drama. Moreover, both parents and teachers stressed the need of more programs such as *Ding Dong School*, *Disneyland*, *Zoo Parade*, and other science presentations, travelogues, and historical offerings. The desirability of better musical programs, more frequently presented, was mentioned. The low level of much of the humor was also cited. Table VII lists the programs suggested by teachers. Both parents and teachers listed a number of programs that they thought were desirable for children. There was rather close agreement. Table VIII presents the parents' list. The Disney type of program is in high favor.

TABLE VII  
*Programs Suggested by Teachers to Be Added or Developed*

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1. Good plays (classics)
  2. Travel
  - 3.5. People—Their Lives and Problems
  - 3.5. Music
  - 5.5. Channel 11
  - 5.5. Science
  - 8.5. History
  - 8.5. Good Children's Shows
  - 8.5. Zoo Parade
  - 8.5. Disneyland
- 

TABLE VIII  
*Desirable Programs for Children (Parents' list)*

- 
1. Disneyland
  2. Mickey Mouse Club
  3. Lassie
  4. Zoo Parade
  5. Father Knows Best
  6. Kukla, Fran and Ollie
  7. Rin Tin Tin
  8. I Love Lucy
  9. Educational (Channel 11)
  - 10.5. Little Rascals
  - 10.5. Mr. Wizard
- 

#### Teacher and parent attitude toward TV

There has been a marked change in the attitude toward TV on the part of many parents and teachers. At first, large numbers were

skeptical concerning any desirable outcome from TV. Others were apprehensive and fearful of the ill-effects of televiewing, and still others were unequivocally opposed to this activity. Typical of complaints were these: "TV is reducing our children to a race of spectators"; "Life should be lived, not watched"; "Interest in reading and in school work is sure to decrease after we have TV." From the first, however, some parents and teachers recognized desirable outcomes and cited improved family relationships and interest in reading as results of televiewing.

Today most parents and teachers accept televiewing as a part of our design for living. They cite problems associated with televiewing less frequently and indicate that many children actually appear to read more now because of interests awakened by TV offerings. However, many are also concerned about the children who read less, as well as about the very large amount of leisure time consumed by TV. It is certainly true that TV uses a great deal of our time. Thus, we are told that no other pursuit except *sleeping* utilizes so much time.

... last year in homes with television sets—three quarters of all the families in the country—more total time was spent watching television than in any other single activity except sleep.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, when we read statements such as the following, our concern over the possible effects of television upon children is increased.

Television will have an effect on your lives even if you never own a TV set and never see or hear a broadcast. The fatal weakness of all efforts to control the excesses and correct the errors of television in the United States is the attitude of people who think themselves untouched because they themselves never look at inferior programs or never see television at all. But there is no immunity—there is no place to hide. So with the parents whose children are never permitted to watch the sadism and horror of the 150 murders

which infest our television screens each week. They imagine themselves safe. But you cannot buy immunity by turning away from what you do not like. The fact is, the one child who does not see horror programs lives and will live in the world created by the fifty who do.<sup>2</sup>

Thus there is the possibility that we may have to look forward to a world in which children's sensitivities will be dulled by constant witnessing of crime, terror, and cruelty on the screen; they may not be excited unduly by scenes of horror, but may come simply to accept them impassively as examples of reality. In fact, many parents are deeply concerned about the kinds of programs children turn to on TV. For example, *The National Association for Better Radio and Television* announced in 1954 that crime and violence programs for children increased 400 per cent during the preceding three years.

As a result of a study made during the week of May 5, 1955, this organization published another report which showed that the situation was somewhat improved because of the increased availability of more desirable programs. The situation in 1956, similar to 1955, proved, however, somewhat disturbing to many persons, because of the character of many programs. In July, 1956, the evaluation committee of the Association made the following statements:

Thirty-two half hours per week of crime programs produced on film specifically for child television audiences were evaluated as "objectionable" or "most objectionable" in this year's NAFBRAT study of children's radio and TV programming. This represents a substantial increase in crime shows from 1955, and is an all-time high in the presentation of telefilm series for children which use crime as their basic theme. [This study and evaluation does not include more than twenty hours per week of crime "westerns" originally pro-

<sup>1</sup>"Special Report: Television, the New Cyclops," *Business Week* (March 10, 1956), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Gilbert Seldes, quoted in "Children and Television—Some Opinions," Los Angeles, California: *National Association for Better Radio and Television*, p. 2.

duced for theatrical release; nor does the figure—about 32 half-hours—include the five hours per week of old Gene Autry and Roy Rogers "features" which the committee found incorporated not only extreme violence, but character traits in the two "heroes" which consistently violates principles of conduct taught to youngsters in the home, the church, and the school.]

Crime is still the biggest single ingredient offered by the television industry as a whole to lure children to the TV set. . . .

However, there are some brighter aspects of the 1956 programs for children. The volume of "excellent" and "good" programming more than doubles the volume of "objectionable" and "most objectionable" programming, although we must qualify this by again pointing out that more than 20 hours of crime westerns are not included in the volume figures.

Despite the limitations of TV, it has many desirable features. The antidote to the undesirable aspects of televiewing lies in a constructive program of guidance for children and young people. Teachers and parents should work together on such a program. They should examine each child's TV preferences and his other interests. They should ascertain the amount of time he gives to radio and the movies. Other leisure-time pursuits and the amount of time given to them should also be studied. The merits and the limitations of favorite interests should be discussed with each

child. If too much time appears to be devoted to TV, other activities should be encouraged to insure a balanced and individually suitable program.

It has proved desirable for parents to set up family councils to determine effective ways of budgeting time. Criteria for the selection of TV programs have been employed successfully in this endeavor.

Parents and teachers generally can make a contribution by encouraging the production of better programs.

Some children need to acquire more efficient reading habits and skills so that they will enjoy the act of reading. And others need to develop a desire to read; a tendency to read widely may be established in some children by associating books with their strong interests. Children should be encouraged to read critically, to listen discriminatingly, and to evaluate the worth of pictured presentations offered on TV and through other media. Televiewing offers an opportunity for desirable motivation of school work through the association of reading and other pursuits with worthwhile interests awakened or extended through this activity.

By guiding children to choose programs with greater discrimination and by associating this strong interest with other desirable activities, we may discover that many benefits may result from the children's favorite leisure-time pursuit.

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#### Flowers Growing

The flower starts with a bud  
Huddled against the stem;  
But as the sun comes up,  
Then it opens and opens very slowly,  
Until the bright colors are showing—  
Reds and blues and yellows glowing.

*Janet Karhan, Grade 6  
San Diego City Schools*

# Windows on the World

## The Popular Arts in the Classroom

Edited by PATRICK HAZARD<sup>1</sup>



Patrick D. Hazard

### A world in your ear

While Ed Murrow's cameras were following the sight of Danny Kaye making friends with the world's children, Moses Asch's tape recorders have been roving over several continents, fixing for future reflection and delight the many man-produced sounds that contribute to the richness and diversity of human culture. In Folkways Records, Asch has formed an organization to preserve forever the sounds, transitory and traditional, of men all over the globe. Asch has a simple but inspiring faith in man's ability to *sound* right to his neighbors. His growing library of ethnic records will, he believes, bring men together; if they first lend an ear to their neighbor's sounds, they cannot help going on to give a part of their hearts. If school children in the lowest grades could develop such esthetic friendships, Danny Kaye's dream of a childhood conspiracy for peace might well come true.

Try some of the records described below in your classroom as follow-up activities to the Ed Murrow-Danny Kaye program. You will be so pleased, I assure you, that the records you choose will be merely the first in a classroom Folkways Library.

*Music of the World's Peoples* (Ethnic Folkways Library, P504, Vol. 1, two 12" LP's, \$11.90). Musical selections from Madagascar, Ireland, Spain, Greece, Tahiti, Bali, Russian Georgia, Japan, France, Nigeria, India, Iceland, Tibet, Russian Gypsy, Arabia.

Technical progress makes it possible, through an album like this, for every schoolhouse in the nation to have reference books in music, just as we have long had dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other guides for printed material. Think of the possibilities of this encyclopedia of sound. Practically every social studies unit can have its listening session, at which the class acquaints itself with the musical

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culture of the nation under consideration. Your superior students can listen carefully to the entire album, seeking an understanding of the exciting differences in the same art among various peoples. The album can serve as background music for dramatic sketches on foreign lands in language arts. You might even have a "Festival of the World's Music" at which each student would be encouraged to choose his favorite selection and then prepare a report on the people who produce such interesting sounds.

The pleasures of the album are not confined to students by any means. I personally find the Japanese selection, the Imperial Sho Koto Chant, continually rewarding for relistening. It is the kind of music that reminds you of the Kabuki Dancers or of great Japanese films like "Gate of Hell," "Rashomon," and "Ugetsu." I might say that this is one of the most rewarding things about incorporating these rich new resources into one's teaching: one at the same time incorporates their richness into one's own life.

*The World of Man. Vol. 1: His Work* (Fp, 731, 10" LP, \$4.25).

Harold Courlander wrote and narrated this album of the sounds man makes to survive. It starts with hunting calls, uncanny imitations of animal cries by men in search of food—in the Western Congo, the Bapindi urge on their hunting dogs and blow wooden horns to lure the antelope; in Brazil, the Kayabi Indian imitates the sound of his prey, the otter; far to the north, an Eskimo hunts walrus in the same way; the French Canadian, the great moose.

Then there are sounds of a Norwegian woman calling cows for milking and of a Philippine Hanunoo tribesman calling his pigs at feeding time. Next, the record presents the sounds of a collective land-clearing of the Kpelle tribesmen in central Liberia; a

Hanunoo tree cutting; an American timber cutting song; an African Bulu house-building song from the Cameroons; a song of Japanese stone cutters; the homebuilding celebration of the Black Caribs of Honduras in Central America. Having made audible the basic activities of securing food and shelter, Courlander then explains the significance of songs and chants connected with providing clothing and with daily work: a Navajo's silversmith's song; a Japanese spinning song; a working song of a Haitian road gang; the song of people in the Hebrides, tiny islands off the bleak Atlantic coast of Scotland, "waulking" (or shrinking) the woolen cloth they have made by wetting, pulling, and pounding; a paddling song of the Badouma boatmen in Equatorial Africa; and finally, a Haitian mortar song, during which two men are working long poles or pestles to pound maize kernels in a large wooden mortar, making a coarse flour for eating.

Harold Courlander concludes his narration with words that succinctly express the scope of the record: "Wherever men are, whatever their language, and whatever their customs, they share the human task of producing food, building out of stones and minerals of the earth, and making life more secure." It is amazing how this imaginative recording covers that wide territory in a very satisfactory introductory way. Highly recommended.

*Ride with the Sun: An Anthology of Folk Tales and Stories from the United Nations* (FP109, 10" LP, \$4.25).

Kathleen Danson Read tells five folk tales from a larger collection by the same name published last year by McGraw-Hill. "The Turtle and the Monkey Share a Tree," a Philippine tale, is like our Bre'r Rabbit briar-patch story. "The Priest and the Pear Tree," a Chinese tale, "is a magic story about a greedy fruit seller." "The Judgment of Karakoush," from Egyptian folklore, tells the story of an unjust ruler who flew into a rage when he should have shown moderation and prudence. "Bukolla," from Iceland, deals with a familiar theme in folklore—

the chase in which magic objects thrown on the ground foil a pursuing giant. "The Deer and the Jaguar Share a House" is a story from Brazil that teaches the folly of suspicion and prejudice. This is another Folkways triumph, extremely usable for literature study in the middle grades, or for private listening with superior students in the primary grades.

*Folksongs of Four Continents* (FP911, 10" LP, \$4.25).

This contains "Bring Me a Little Water, Silvy," a delightful field cry by the Negro folk singer, Huddie Ledbetter; "Ah! Si Mon Moine," a French-Canadian folksong that would be rather sophisticated for French-speaking children, but which is harmless for our children in French; "Bimini Gal," a variant of a street dance from Nassau in the Bahamas; "The Greenland Whalers," a New England version of a sailors' chanty; "Mi Caballo Blanco," a Chilean song about a beautiful white horse; "Oleanna," a Norwegian song satirizing the immigrants who believed in the dream of Ole Bull (a nineteenth century Norwegian violinist) for a Utopian colony in America, translated into English by Pete Seeger; "Banuwa Yo," a Liberian festival song to be chanted by the entire audience at the football stadium in the capital, Monrovia, sung here by students at Western Reserve University who were taught the song by natives attending that university; "Ragupati Ragava Rajah Ram," a favorite of the late Mahatma Gandhi, which asks the Hindus and Moslems to be tolerant of each other's religions; and "Hey, Daroma," an Israeli folk tune about their dreams of turning their new land into a garden. Like the other Folkways albums reviewed here, this album contains a pamphlet with texts and explanatory material. You can have a complete list of Folkways albums by dropping a card to June Distler, Folkways Records, 117 W. 46th Street, New York, New York.

*Follow the Sunset*, with Charity Bailey and Robert Emmett, a beginning geography with nine songs from around the world. (Folk-



ways FP706, 10" LP, \$4.25).

"What happens to the sun at night?" is a question frequently put by youngsters to their elders. This record is designed to help them find the answer. Starting at a point on the Atlantic coast of the United States, the narrator explains the westward journey of the sun, and Charity Bailey sings a lullaby that is favored at that point in the sun's course, "Sleep Baby Sleep," Mexican Lullaby, "Go Long Li'l Doggies," Hawaiian Lullaby, "Chinese Lullaby," "Kuma Echa" from Israel, "Nigerian Lullaby," and "All through the Night" in Wales are the remaining musical reference points on this imaginative presentation of the sun's place in man's world. The record ends with "Shenandoah," also sung in the Eastern United States—an entire day has passed.

### Television

"Wide, Wide World" was one of the most memorable new series of 1956. Critics admired it as a bold attempt to do something only TV could do—roam about the country looking for picturesque and significant subjects for live TV cameras. Now in its second year, "Wide, Wide World" has acquired both virtues and vices. In its favor are its mastery of production and its growing tendency to explore large, significant themes in each program—e.g., "Campus, U.S.A." (December 9), "Christmas in America" (December 23), "The American Woman" (January 6), "Texas" (January 20), and "The Presidency, from George Washington to the Current Encumbent" (February 3). But "Wide, Wide World" is also old enough to have recognizable vices: its penchant for a lush prose that aims for grandeur but achieves only mawkishness, and its neurotic obsession with its own technological virtuosity. This latter weakness was perhaps excusable when the program was attempting to establish a reputation; it now grows more tiresome each Sunday afternoon. This callow search for "Firsts" (an attempt to pick up a BBC signal is the current project) reveals a confusion in purpose in "Wide, Wide

World" that could eventually smother its considerable educational potential. For the real merit of the program lies in its eager search after the excitement and stimulation of reality; in a TV world that ordinarily thrives on illusion and triviality, it successfully reminds the viewer that there is nothing more rewarding than a lively curiosity about the real world. This attitude is, of course, one that teachers constantly try to inculcate in the young. For that reason alone, elementary teachers ought to discuss this show with their students. Because the program has interested a great many teachers, we asked Barry Wood to explain the thinking behind "Wide, Wide World," and he graciously replied:

We believe "Wide, Wide World" presents its producers with totally unique opportunities both in concept and execution. To plan a program, we must have a deep and searching eye for places, events, and people in the United States, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, and the Bahama Islands. So far the limitations of our cameras do not permit us to present any more of the "Wide, Wide World" to our viewers. Guided first of all in our selection of material by what we know our equipment will bring us, we then look for a subject that will make a story revealing the innate character of a place, an event, and a people. We look for an appealing blend of historic and geographical features. We interlace these with vivid segments of contemporaneous happenings. None of these elements, moreover, must ever be over the heads of any particular segment of our viewing audience. When our cameras visit places and show people in typical activities, we hope that these portrayals strike the widest common denominator by presenting facts of the greatest interest to all. Take a specific example, our presentation of the Grand Canyon.

When we envisioned the initial telecast of the regularly scheduled "Wide, Wide World" series, we sought to present a world's first live television picture from the Grand Canyon. This project was girt round with so many restrictions, technically, that it was generally regarded as

impossible. Our technical installation had to be built from the ground up, and local conditions for telecasting appeared to present problems that were insurmountable.

Because one characteristic of "Wide, Wide World" is to conquer the unconquerable, our team of producer, directors, and technicians fought the battle of the Grand Canyon and won. Having proved that it was possible to present a TV picture from the Canyon, what then was our underlying philosophy in wanting to present it?

Initially, it had value as being a television first. Daily we seek to shrink the horizons, and presenting the show from the Grand Canyon was a giant step forward.

Secondly, what did the Grand Canyon offer us? In examining this great programmatic potential, we can best explain what "Wide, Wide World" offers of genuine pertinence to youth.

Geographically, the Grand Canyon is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Historically, it glows brilliantly in the story of the development of the West. Coronado, in his famed *entrada* from Mexico to Santa Fe, passed but 14 miles from the Canyon. In geology, the Canyon is a mine of richest material for the student. On the Canyon walls, etched for all the world to see, is the story of the world's growth. For the student, there is the entire history of a complete culture, of our Indian civilization, of the cliff dwellers, actually ranging back to the beginning of man.

Yet aside from that, the Canyon is one of the world's great show places. It is a vacation land par excellence. It has a majesty and a grandeur that is breathtaking, and it was this rounded picture of the Canyon we presented. Only the most insensitive viewer would not be touched by an offering of this magnitude. For the Canyon is all things to all people, and the adult viewer might find a complete enjoyment in just the pictorial majesty of the Canyon, while to the student, it would challenge his imagination, stimulate his curiosity, and excite inquiry.

In the above analysis, you have a statement of the kind of thinking which determines our approach to every segment of "Wide, Wide World." Each subject must in itself be presented as a self-contained gem, as both a picture and a subject. It

must also merge into the ninety-minute pattern, illuminating the basic themes toward which we are leaning more and more in the production of these shows.

The Woman's National Book Committee has prepared booklists for several of the forthcoming programs of "Wide, Wide World." By capitalizing on the interest generated in viewing one of these programs, we may be able to convince many of our students that another wide, wide world is always at their fingertips—in the shelves of their libraries. This program arouses curiosity for books to satisfy. So every other Sunday on NBC-TV (4-5:30 p.m., EST), Barry Wood and his rotating staff of four producers stand ready to open for your students yet another window on our wide, wide world. You can open these windows still wider and show them how to look for significant things in the widest world of all—the printed record of the human mind.

### Booklists

The following list of books has been compiled by Dorothy H. West Editor of the Standard Catalog Series of the H. W. Wilson Company for the Woman's National Book Association. The titles are arranged with the easiest books first, those for the middle grades next, and the books for older boys and girls at the end.

#### FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS, WIDE WIDE WORLD

*Brownies—It's Christmas.* By G. L. Adshead. With pictures by Velma Ilsley. Oxford. 1955. \$2. When the brownies finish trimming the tree for Old Grandmother and Old Grandfather, they are greeted with a very pleasant surprise. For the younger children.

*With Bells on, a Christmas Story.* By Katherine Milhous. Scribner. 1955. \$2. Set in old Pennsylvania, in Conestoga wagon days. Becky and Chrissy get ready for Christmas by making a "putz" or manger scene. For the younger children.

*Pedro, the Angel of Olvera Street.* By Leo Politi. Scribner. 1946. \$2. About the famous Mexican Christmas celebration on Olvera Street in Los Angeles. Pedro was a little boy who played the part of an angel. For the younger children.

*Christmas Anna Angel.* By Ruth Sawyer. Illustrations by Kate Seredy. Viking. 1944. \$2. Anna, a little Hungarian girl who has known three years of war, wonders what the world will do without Christmas cakes, and dreams of a present of "One Christmas cake, shaped like a little clock." The Anna Angel makes it possible. For the middle grades.

*Trees Kneel at Christmas.* By Maud H. Lovelace. Illustrated by Gertrude Herrick Howe. Crowell. 1951. \$2.50. A Syrian Christmas legend that is brought to life in a Brooklyn park on Christmas Eve. For the middle grades.

*In Clean Hay.* By E. P. Kelly. Illustrated by Maud and Mischa Petersham. Macmillan. 1953. \$1.25. A folktale about children who went to Krakow on Christmas Eve to present their Szopka Krakowska (puppet show). For the middle grades.

*Silent Night: the Story of a Song.* By Hertha E. Pauli. Illustrated by Fritz Kredel. Knopf. 1943. \$2.50. The story of how the carol came to be written in the Austrian village on Christmas Eve in 1818 and what has happened to it since. For older boys and girls.

*All about Christmas.* By Maymie R. Krythe. Harper. 1954. \$2.75. Recounts the origin of Christmas and the history of hundreds of traditions connected with its observance. For all ages.

*Golden Book of Christmas Tales. Legends From Many Lands.* By Lillian Lewicki. Paintings by James Lewicki. Simon & Schuster. 1956. \$1.50. Eighteen Nativity legends from the folklore of Greece, Italy, England, and Scandinavia. For all grades.

*Holidays Around the World.* By Joseph Gaer. Drawings by Annie Marie Jaus. Little. 1953. \$3. Explains and compares the holidays and festivals celebrated by the five major religions—Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. For all grades.

#### FLORIDA

*Freddy goes to Florida.* By Walter R. Brooks. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. Knopf. 1949. \$2.50. A nonsense tale relating how Mr. Bean's farm animals migrated to the South for the winter. For the younger children.

*Secret River.* By Marjorie K. Rawlings. Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. Scribner. 1955. \$2.50. When hard times comes to the Florida forest, a small girl sets out with her dog to find the secret river where there are reported to be quantities of fish. For the middle grades.

*Strawberry Girl.* By Lois Lenski. Lippincott. 1945. \$3. Life among the Florida crackers is told in the story of Birdie Boyer, the warm-hearted little girl whose family makes its living by raising strawberries. For the middle grades.

*Wahoo Bobcat.* By Joseph W. Lippincott. Illustrated by Paul Bransom. Lippincott. 1950. \$3. Deep in the Florida wilderness a great bobcat reigns supreme. Only the boy Sammy, who roamed the woods, cared enough to befriend the fierce King of the Wahoo. For older boys and girls.

*War Chief of the Seminoles.* By May Y. McNeer. Illustrated by Lynd Ward. Random House. 1954. \$1.50. The biography of Osceola, Seminole Indian chief, is essentially an account of the bitter Seminole wars. For older boys and girls.

*The Yearling.* By Marjorie K. Rawlings. With pictures by N. C. Wyeth. Scribner. 1946. \$3.50. The important happenings in the life of a boy in the scrub regions near the St. Johns River in Florida. For older boys and girls.

#### PRESIDENCY

*Abraham Lincoln.* By Ingri & Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. Doubleday. 1939. \$2.75. An introductory biography and picture book for younger children.

*George Washington.* By Ingri & Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. Doubleday. 1936. \$2.75. Large size picture-story book depicting scenes in the life of George Washington. For the younger children.

*George Washington.* By Genevieve S. Foster. Scribner. 1949. \$2.25. This story of Washington tells the events of his life, omitting stories which are now known to lack authenticity. For the middle grades.

*Story of the Presidents of the United States of America.* By Maud and Miska Petersham. Macmillan. 1953. \$3. Brief sketches of the 34 presidents epitomize the life, term of office, and personality of each. For the middle grades.

*You and the Constitution of the United States.* By Paul A. Witty and Julilly Kohler. Pictures by Lois Fisher. Childrens Press. 1948. \$1.50. America is here visualized as a Freedom Train on which we are all passengers. Starting originally with thirteen cars, it now has forty-eight, and it has always needed a constitution to couple them together. For the older boys and girls.

*"Ike" Eisenhower, Statesman and Soldier of Peace.* By Delos W. Lovelace. Illustrated with photographs. Crowell. 1952. \$2.75. A direct account of the major events of President Eisenhower's life. For the older boys and girls.

*Abraham Lincoln, Friend of the People.* By Clara I. Judson. Pen drawings by Robert Frankenberg; kodachromes of the Chicago Historical Society Lincoln diaramas. Wilcox & Follett. 1950. \$3.50. The real Lincoln—in his gauntness, his gawkiness, and his greatness—the backwoods boy who became President. For the older boys and girls.

*We Are the Government.* By Mary Elting in collaboration with Margaret Gossett. Doubleday. 1945. \$2.75. Workings of each department are explained by picture and example. Gay red, green, and black drawings by Jeanne Bendick are scattered through the text. For the older boys and girls.

*The Presidents in American History.* By Charles A. Beard. Messner. 1953. \$2.95. Illuminating summaries of the lives and administrations of each of our presidents from Washington to Eisenhower. For the older boys and girls.

#### Other Christmas events on TV

"Amahl and the Night Visitors," NBC-TV's traditional Christmas opera, December 16, time to be announced. "The Stingiest Man in Town," a 90-minute musical based on Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," will be presented on "The Alcoa Hour," Sunday, December 23, 9-10:30 p.m. Basil Rathbone plays and sings the elder Scrooge in a cast that includes Vic Damone, Johnny Desmond, The Four Lads,

Patrice Munsel, Martyn Green, Robert Weede, and Betty Madigan. See my column "Listenableables and Lookables" in December 13, *Scholastic Teacher* for a complete, last-minute rundown on Christmas programs on radio and TV.

#### MR. WIZARD

Don Herbert continues to interest young people in everyday science. You may stimulate your class to view his program regularly by using a color movie, "Meet Mr. Wizard," available free from The Cereal Institute, 135 S. LaSalle Street, Chicago 3, Illinois, Attention: Mr. Harry Fowler. Here is Mr. Wizard's December schedule: December 1, Communications; December 8, Bridges; December 15, Weather; December 22, Heat (expansion); and December 29, Explosions. Many stations carry the show, which originates live, Saturdays, 5:30-6 p.m., EST, on a delayed basis—giving some teachers even more time to plan to use a particular show.

#### Paperbacks for elementary school

Last year the Teen Age Book Club for Scholastic Magazines distributed over four million paperbound books to high school students throughout the country. In the past ten years almost fifteen million books have been distributed through TAB, Readers' Choice, and other specialized book services. For the first time, Readers' Choice offers a list of 16 books at 25c each to elementary school readers. The titles on the inaugural list were selected in consultation with Mary Harbage, former Director of Elementary Education, Akron, Ohio, and Lilian Moore, well-known author of children's

books and a former member of the Bureau of Educational Research, New York City Board of Education. For information on how your students can begin the habit of buying paperback books in grade school, drop a card to Morris Goldberger, Readers' Choice, 33 W. 42nd Street, New York 36, New York.

#### Van Gogh. A sneak preview

Movie advertising need not be revolting. The non-theatrical Text-Film Department of McGraw-Hill and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have joined hands to produce a splendid twenty-minute color film, "Van Gogh: Darkness into Light." A frank plug for the studio's new film on Van Gogh, "Lust for Life," it takes a look behind the scenes of a distinguished feature. Although the film has been made to spearhead the general release of "Lust for Life," Howard Thompson, a *New York Times* film critic, found it "a winning, separate entity on filmmaking." Distributors recommend it for use in art and language arts, upper elementary and secondary levels, (Available through the Text-Film Department, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 330 W. 42nd Street, New York 36, New York). Other aids for a first-rate film: The Van Gogh volume (50c) in the Pocket Library of Great Art, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York 20, New York, Attention: Mr. John Ware; Ellen Kennedy's study guide for the film in December *Clearing House*, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, New Jersey. Mature students in upper elementary grades will be seeing this film anyway. What can you do to deepen that experience?

# The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS<sup>1</sup>

## Mass media in the classroom

The popular arts in the classroom—called “mass media” in our professional tongue—were given prominent position in *Variety*, the national entertainers’ trade magazine, for August 8. Captioned “Every Schoolmarm a Critic; Classrooms in Popular Arts Probe,” Robert J. Landry’s article credits “an articulate bloc of young pedagogs” with giving impetus to the movement.

Mr. Landry pointed to the publication of Professor Hazard’s column, “The Popular Arts in the Classroom,” in two of the Council publications—we welcome Mr. Hazard!—as indicative of the trend. Then, jazz in English courses, school adaptations of popular motion pictures based on classical novels, popular arts festivals on the campuses, and popular arts criticism by teachers were noted as part of educators’ taking the “hex off less-than-fine arts,” or, to state it positively, “developing the cultural potentials in mass communication.”

Mr. Landry pointed to the trend as having cultural rather than vocational objectives. He visualized education and entertainment meeting at many points, an arrangement not always admitted by what he calls the “literary mob.”

The NCTE’s position for about a decade now has been that the popular arts have a place in the language arts classroom. The position has called for more than incidental use of the arts where they and education coincide. The “Subject Matter” of the mass media has value in itself rather than as supplementary material. It can be used to develop discriminating tastes, critically evaluative ability for listening and seeing, and debunking skills in the face of pressurized language from many sources. Such study is a necessity in our day of motivational research, area-saturated advertising, reprints, digests, condensations, and chain-owned media.

In this sense, Mr. Landry understated what teachers have been trying to do with the mass media.

Mr. Landry voiced pleasure that the bars of intellectual snobbery have been dropped to let the popular arts get into the classroom. Perhaps we should find pleasure in having our work presented to such an esoteric group as *Variety*’s readers represent.

William A. Jenkins

## Christmas filmstrips



A scene from the delightful filmstrip, “The Story of Silent Night,” one of the Jam Handy Christmas Series.

Enthusiasm of children for the Christmas holiday is directed into several curriculum areas by a new kit of filmstrips in color, produced by The Jam Handy Organization.

The new kit, “Christmas Series,” has been class-tested for use in elementary grades. The areas to which the filmstrips may be applied are music, social studies, health, science, safety, and literature.

Titles of the films are: *The Story of Silent*

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Jenkins is Associate Professor of English and Elementary Education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.



*Night, The Tree and Other Traditions, The Story of the Christmas Seal, The Christmas Tree Industry, and A Safe Christmas with the Reeds.*

The filmstrips are in color artwork, with the exception of the filmstrip on growing Christmas trees, which is in color photography.

The series will help children to gain an appreciation of a favorite Christmas carol and its origin and acquaint them with the origin of our Christmas traditions. The Christmas Seal story is told from its interesting beginning and stresses its importance in health. Conservation principles are emphasized, and recognition of familiar Christmas trees is encouraged in the filmstrip on the tree industry. The final filmstrip creates an awareness of good safety practices during the holiday season.

The series is priced at \$33.50 and individual strips at \$5.95. The new kit is available through the Jam Handy Organization, 2821 East Grand Boulevard, Detroit 11, Michigan, and all Jam Handy dealers.

### Problems of the school

"New Riddles for Our Schools," *Saturday Review's* annual education survey, was a feature of the September 8 issue. An overview of the problems facing the schools—increasing enrolments, segregation-integration, maintaining quality in curricula, the Bay City experiment, and the junior high school question—was given by Fred M. Hechinger, formerly education editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*. College problems were reviewed by John Haverstick, and Bess Furman offered a whodunit solution: "Who Killed Federal Aid?" Miss Furman's analysis is the most convincing and lucid we have found on this very knotty problem. Old Fogeyism, the Powell Amendment, and partisan politics bordering on the blundering were blamed for the demise of the bill.

"Why Johnny Can't Add" (and the facts behind his inability which bode ill for America's future) was spotlighted. In the spotlight

was the glaring explanation that too many elementary teachers lack confidence in their mathematical ability, now dislike arithmetic or remember disliking it as children, and can be licensed to teach arithmetic in far too many states without having earned a single college credit in mathematics.

Finally, the editorial for September 8 was "Why Teach?" by Claude M. Fues. The ideas, well put, are probably known to most of us. We know we are short on salary, long on service; tireless but tired. But much of the public who read *Saturday Review* do not know these things. And if our faith in the profession needs reaffirming, perhaps we can read them, too. To this writer, the biggest riddle facing the schools, and the population, still is how to get teachers, how to keep them, and how to keep them happy. These problems must be faced before education can solve the other riddles.

### A boost for teaching

*Compton's at Work in the Classroom* is a collection of practical, tested activities to help the elementary teacher make the most of her classroom encyclopedia. There are activities to develop basic skills in science, social studies, and language arts; activities for classroom enrichment; and down-to-earth solutions that teachers have worked out for recurring problems. Such things as helping select books for children, preparing a science fair, and helping the reluctant reader are included in this section.

*At Work in the Classroom* might be viewed as a booklet designed just to sell *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia*. Such an interpretation would be a rather narrow one, however, for it is a service bulletin for teachers. Those now teaching can find in its 48 pages many ways to improve their classrooms and teaching. Student teachers can find answers to many questions which are usually omitted when formal education courses are organized.

Copies of the booklet are free. Write to F. E. Compton and Company, 1000 N. Dearborn, Chicago 10, Illinois.

### Catalog of free materials

*Catalog of Free Teaching Aids* has been revised by the authors, Gordon Salisbury and Robert Sheridan. The new catalog lists 4000 free items, booklets, charts, maps, pictures, posters, and filmstrips. Grade levels, descriptions, and sources are given for each item. Items listed have been chosen for their direct bearing on curriculum subjects. Those useful for kindergarten through junior college have been included. We think the catalog is a good buy for those who make use of free materials.

Write to the authors at Post Office Box 943, Riverside, Calif. Price \$1.50.

### American Heritage

A superb collection of Americana can be found in the October issue of *American Heritage*. The story of the building of the "great bridge," the Brooklyn Bridge; the Mormon trek to Utah; a sketch of Henry Clay, the "man everybody liked"; how the Navy got its wings; and several other information-packed pieces comprise the October number.

One of the favorite upper-grade units is on the American Indian of yesteryear. "Myths That Hide the American Indian," by Oliver LaFarge, would be an excellent source for such a unit and would help to banish the stereotypes which exist everywhere. The full-spread map accompanying the article, giving location of tribes and nations, is one of the most complete we have seen.

*American Heritage* is not an inexpensive magazine and the language, of course, is adult. Yet we recommend it highly for the consistently usable level of its articles, as source materials for its fine format. Bound in a hard cover, the bi-monthly magazine is as durable as many books.

*American Heritage* costs \$2.95 for a single issue, or \$12 for a year's subscription. Write to 551 Fifth Avenue, New York 17.

### Best of '55

*Outstanding Educational Books of 1955*, a

descriptive bibliography of the sixty best professional books published last year, is available from the Enoch Pratt Free Library, 400 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, Md. The titles were chosen by a board of educators from throughout the country. 25 copies for \$1.

### Carnival of Books

The "Carnival of Books" radio program this fall is featuring books by authors from Sweden, Denmark, France, England, and Germany. Dates for the broadcasts are listed for the originating station, WMAQ, Chicago (8:45-9:00 a.m., CST). The program is broadcast on station WRCA, New York City, on Sundays a week later than the Chicago broadcast, and is broadcast on other stations three or four weeks later. Check the station in your area for day and time of broadcast.

The programs for November (still being broadcast in many areas) and December are as follows:

- Nov. 3 *Mystery of Mont Saint-Michel* (Holt) by Michel Rouze (France).
- Nov. 10 *Babar's Fair* (Random House) by Laurent de Brunhoff (France).
- Nov. 17 *The Fanny Guy* (Harcourt, Brace) by Grace Hogarth (England).
- Nov. 24 *Five Boys in a Cave* (John Day) by Richard Church (England).
- Dec. 1 *Windruff of Links Tor* (Longmans, Green) by Joseph Chipperfield (England).
- Dec. 8 *The Fairy Doll* (Viking Press) by Rumer Godden (England).
- Dec. 15 *Family Shoes* (Random House) by Noel Streatfield (England).
- Dec. 22 *Welcome, Santa* (Longmans, Green) by Constance Savery (England).
- Dec. 29 *The Story of Albert Schweitzer* (Abelard Schuman) by Jo Mantton (England).

### Spectaculars

Make a note to catch some good viewing of television "spectaculars" (ex-adjective, now a noun in the bumptious world of the glass-front cabinet) this winter. On NBC, the Alcoa hour will present Scrooge in new dress on December 23. *The Stingiest Man in Town* will be a musical of *A Christmas Carol*. On January 13 Prokofiev's *War and Peace* will make its American debut. Opera will be featured again on February 13 with *La Traviata*. *Mourning Becomes Electra* will be the drama on April 21.

Some time in February CBS will present *Cinderella* with words and music by Rogers and Hammerstein. Early in 1957, Sidney King-ley's play, *Men in White* will be presented. It will appear on "Ford Star Jubilee."

### Temple Reading Institute

"Reading Disabilities in the Classroom and Clinic" is the theme of the 1957 Reading Institute of Temple University, January 28-February 1. For further information on program, evaluation meetings, or hotel facilities write to Coordinator, Institute Services, The Reading Clinic, Temple University, Philadelphia 22. Registration is limited and must be made in advance.

### A-V merger

*Educational Screen* and *Audio-Visual Guide* have been merged to form one large magazine. They are the two oldest magazines in the audio-visual field. The "new" magazine featured in October a picture story of the use of maps and globes to develop global understanding, a report on *Educational Screen's* two-year-old International Tape Exchange Program, and a selected list of 16 mm films and other a-v aids about the United Nations. The October issue celebrated the eleventh anniversary of the world organization.

### Guide to free films and strips

*Educators Guide to Free Films*, 16th Edition (\$6) and *Educators Guide to Free Slide-films*, 8th Edition (\$5) are available from the

Educators Progress Service, Randolph, Wisconsin.

The guide to free films lists 3,453 titles on 30 topics. As we noted when the 1953 edition was published, there is no section on language arts. By careful checking of related areas, however, the English teacher could find a number of films for use in her classes. Some of the films are available to users without rental, service, or shipping charges. All titles are annotated. Many of the films can be used in the classroom. Others would be more useful to civic groups. But the listing is as complete as can be found anywhere.

The guide to free slidefilms lists 631 titles, including 38 sets of slides, from 94 sources. Equally discerning annotations are provided to help the teacher in search of multisensory material. With this and the companion volume, used judiciously, any teacher should be able to broaden the scope of her teaching.

### Book fairs

*How to Run a Book Fair* by Dorothy L. McFadden was received too late for our readers to make use of it during Children's Book Week, but it is useful pamphlet for any time of the year. PTA groups, teachers-in-training, libraries, and civic groups sponsor book fairs throughout the year. How to display the books so that the patrons will use them, like them, and buy and/or read them is the idea behind the booklet.

Out of nine years' experiences working with the annual book fair sponsored by the New York Times and the Children's Book Council in New York, Miss McFadden has drawn a wealth of ideas for entertainment, school relations, promotion and publicity, and follow-up activities. More activities and suggestions than any one committee could possibly use are given. But that is a strong feature of the booklet. Enough ideas are offered to please any group, to meet any situation.

Write to Children's Book Council, 50 West 53rd Street, New York 19. *How To Run a*

*Book Fair* costs 60 cents.

The Children's Book Council also is offering for 35 cents a "Book Puzzle Pad," developed by Eugene Maleska.

### Children's Book Club

*Dangerous Island* by Helen Mather-Smith, illustrated by Manning de V. Lee (Dodd, Mead and Company, \$2.75) was the October selection of the *Weekly Reader* Children's Book Club. The story is a delightful combination of adventure and fantasy. What happens to three young children when their raft breaks loose from mooring on the Jersey shore, carries them to sea, and they become modern Robinson Crusoes is excitingly told. The December selection is *All About Dinosaurs*, by Roy Chapman Andrews.

New members to the club this year will receive the usual four selections plus the 1956-57 United States "Infograph," and Hammond's *Illustrated Atlas for Young America*.

Write to *Weekly Reader* Children's Book Club, Education Center, Columbus 16, Ohio. A year's membership costs \$5. Memberships might make good Christmas gifts for youngsters on your list and might be a good suggestion to give to parents of third through eighth graders who want to get books for their children.

### Junior Literary Guild

The following are the Junior Literary Guild choices for December:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:

*Edward Lear's Nonsense Book* by Tony Pazzo. Garden City Books, \$2.50.

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old:

*The Magic Christmas Tree* by Lee Kingman. Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, \$2.75.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years old:

*Stowaway to the Mushroom Planet* by Eleanor Cameron. Little, Brown, \$2.75.

For girls 12 to 16 years old:

*Girl in Buckskin* by Dorothy Gilman Butters. Macrae Smith, \$2.75.

For boys 12 to 16 years old:

*The Black Stallion's Courage* by Walter Farley. Random House, \$2.

### Noted briefly

*Organizing Reading Programs in the School*, a report of the Eleventh Annual Conference on Reading, University of Pittsburgh, July 18-29, 1956. Edited by Donald L. Cleland. Order from University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13. \$1.50.

\* \* \*

*Guiding Growth in Written Expression*, Volume I, Young Children. First of three supplements to the Los Angeles curriculum guide, *Educating the Children of Los Angeles County*, which develops and illustrates the idea that language development is an integral part of personality. Write to Division of Elementary Education, 800 North Spring Street, Los Angeles 12.

\* \* \*

*Teachers of Children Who Are Deaf*, Bulletin No. 6, 1955, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. A report based on findings of the study, "Quality and Preparation of Teachers of Exceptional Children." Write to Supt. of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25. Price 35 cents.



May Hill Arbuthnot

# BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Edited by MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

*Mrs. Arbuthnot is well-known as a writer and lecturer in the field of children's literature. She is the author of CHILDREN AND BOOKS (Scott, Foresman, 1947) and three anthologies, combined in the single volume, THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY (Scott, Foresman, 1953).*

*MARGARET MARY CLARK reviews books of science, social studies, and biography. Miss Clark is head of the Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library, and a member of the committee for ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS (National Council of Teachers of English, 1956).*

## Come Christmas

*The Magic Christmas Tree.* By Lee Kingman.

Pictures by Bettina. Ariel Books, Farrar, 1956. \$2.75. (5-9).

This little book will catch everyone's eye at Christmas time. It is beautiful to look at and as sentimental as a Christmas tree ornament, which is all right. Christmas is a sweet, sad, happy time and so is the story of two lonely little girls. Joanna, from the cottage, was lonely because her ten much older brothers and sisters could not be bothered with her. Julie, of the big house, was lonely because she was an only child. Both little girls ran away to the forest, but at different times, and both discovered and loved the same small pine tree. Joanna found it first and left her favorite doll there for safe keeping. Julie found it next and the doll as well, so she added a doll bed and a little fur rug. Each child thought the tree was magic and hers alone. New objects kept appearing until the little tree sheltered a whole crèche. Then, the girls met and there was a quarrel. But the tree must have been magic for its spell worked, and the girls discovered the old, old Christmas secret of happiness—loving and

sharing. The story is charmingly told with exquisite pictures.

A

*Christmas on the Mayflower.* By Wilma Pitchford Hays. Illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. Coward-McCann, 1956. \$2.50. (7-10).

Before the first Thanksgiving in this country, it seems our Pilgrim fathers celebrated a first Christmas in the new world, aboard the Mayflower. Mrs. Hays' research has yielded some surprising findings. The Pilgrims started work on their Common House on Christmas Day, 1620 (which would be like them). But it seems that only Captain Jones of the Mayflower had kept the sailors from a mutiny while the Pilgrims erected their first shelter, so anxious was the crew to set sail for England. Mrs. Hays sends young Giles Hopkins ashore with the men but with a



Margaret Mary Clark



promise given to his sister Damaris that he will bring back something with which they can celebrate Christmas. This is a strange idea for Pilgrims, but Mrs. Hays has documented her tale for adult readers and it makes a charming Christmas story for young Americans today.



*The Magic Christmas Tree*

Roger Duvoisin's illustrations heighten the atmosphere of gloomy foreboding and wintry loneliness out of which grows that strange, momentary respite of good cheer, as hostile sailors and doubting Pilgrims sit down together to keep the Christmas feast.

A

*The Fairy Doll.* By Rumer Godden. Illustrated by Adrienne Adams. Viking, 1956. \$2.50. (5-10).



No one ever needed the help of a good fairy more than small, unhappy Elizabeth. She was the youngest of four children. They were long, lean, clever, and capable. She was short, fat, clumsy, and also a blunderer. Worst of all she knew it and was sometimes very naughty besides. One day Great Grandmother put the fairy doll in Elizabeth's hands and told her the fairy would help her. The doll wasn't really a fairy at all, but every year she sparkled and waved her wand atop the Christmas tree; so they called her the fairy doll. Now the other children were envious of Elizabeth and anxious to show her just how she ought to take care of the fairy doll. But Elizabeth would not allow them to touch it, for strange things were happening. Elizabeth would hear a faint little "ting" deep inside her, and then she'd know what to do or how to do it. She even learned to ride her bicycle, and that really was magical. But when the fairy doll suddenly went out of her life, Elizabeth made a strange discovery as Great Grandmother knew she would.

This is an exquisite little tale, the third in Rumer Godden's series of doll stories. *The Dolls' House* was the most complex and poignant, *Impunity Jane* the gayest, and this one less doll and more little girl than any of the others. It is a sensitive study of the youngest in a family, and Elizabeth's heartbreaks are very real indeed.

A

### **The sound of singing**

*The First Noel: Animal Songs of the Nativity.*

Collected by Ada L. F. Snell. Illustrated by Sybil Clark Fonda. Bookman, 1956. \$2.50. (5—).

Kenneth Grahame wrote in *The Wind and the Willows*—

Who were the first to cry Nowell?  
Animals all, as it befell.

With this in mind, Ada Snell has collected twenty-one songs of or about the animals who came humbly to the manger to see the Babe and add their Glorias to the Angelic song.

This is a beautiful book in format and content, the verses adorned with charming pen and ink sketches of the small choristers. "The swallow, the moth and the mouse were there," the dormouse and the lizard, the hedgehog and the hare, "One small fish from the river . . . One wild bee from the heather," "The little dog has sport" and the cock crows jubilantly "Christus natus est." There is a joyous notes to these poems (no music) which children will enjoy, and they will catch the air of reverence too. This is a book for the whole family to bring out at Christmas time and share. Schools will find in it fresh material for choral speaking and for the children to hear and learn readily because of the lovely singing quality of the verses.

A

*The Year Around Poems for Children.* Selected by Alice I. Hazeltine and Elva S. Smith. Decorations by Paula Hutchison. Abingdon Press, 1956. \$2.50. (8-14).



This second book of seasonal poems inevitably invites comparison with the Brewtons' *Sing a Song of Seasons* reviewed in the April number of *Elementary English*. Both are handsome books with some two hundred poems and amazingly few duplications. Since seasonal poems are always in demand and poems for special holidays—Arbor Day, Mother's Day, and all the others—are hard to vary, schools will welcome both books. There is a difference in the price of these two anthologies, accounted for in part by the difference in format. The selection of poems is excellent in both.

A

*Away We Go! 100 Poems for the Very Young.* Compiled by Catherine Schaefer McEwen. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. Crowell, 1956. \$2.50. (3-8).



Here are only a hundred poems for the price of the larger collections. Barbara Cooney's illustrations almost make up for the difference. They are gay, full of children and beasts in action, and as beguiling as Miss Cooney's pictures always are. This is not a distinguished collection, nor does it contain much that is new, but it does have some pleasant verses for the youngest children in a conveniently small book. It is hard to see why Mary McB. Green's "Taking Off" should be labeled "Unknown author" since it is, by this time, a fairly familiar poem.

A

*New Feathers for the Old Goose.* By John Becker. Illustrated by Virginia Campbell. Pantheon, 1956. \$3.00. (4-8).

Not *Old Mother Goose* but some *new feathers for the old goose*, which, freely translated, means ultra-modern nonsense to cheer the young and old. If you prefer to hear your children chanting "Hinkery, stinkery, Sheila Claire," instead of "Hickory dickory dare," that is your privilege. Or if you wish to know why Jezebel Jones smelled really punk," just think of the animal that rhymes with that last word and you'll be on the right scent.

When you watch for  
Feather and fur  
Feather and fur

Do not stir  
Do not stir. . .

is sound advice for young naturalists. But "A-Birding We Will Go" introduces some double-meaning fowls not found in ornithologies, "The Hoopee" bird, for example. "The Blue Jay and the Bluebird True" is a pleasant forth-right poem, and the going-to-sleep rhyme of "Seven



Little Rabbits" will certainly lull the baby-sitter who reads it aloud. In short, when this clever writer turns his back on funny adult double meanings he can write delightful nonsense and good light verse. As it stands these are sophisticated jingles, sometimes with music and illustrated with the most fetching water colors we have seen.

A

*Jonathan Blake. The Life and Times of a Very Young Man.* By William Wise. Illustrated by Howard Simon. Knopf, 1956. \$2.00. (6-10.).

Mr. Wise has a happy facility with verse, and many of these poems, written chiefly in the first person, will strike a responsive chord in children younger than the publishers indicate. For instance, "Jonathan's Private Zoo" of toy animals will amuse the fours, but there is only an occasional subject which will appeal to any child over eight. "Telegram" is one of these—and a delightful one! Mr. Wise writes well, but his observations of children are not too original, as the familiar subject matter of



these verses shows. Attractive pen and ink sketches of Jonathan add interest to the poems.

A

#### A pleasant miscellany

*Mrs. Wappinger's Secret.* By Florence Hightower. Illustrated by Beth and Joe Krush. Houghton, 1956. \$3.00 (8-11).



Ten-year-old Charlie Porter has dedicated his summer to unearthing buried treasure. What's more, he has a co-conspirator in his old friend, the artistic and eccentric Mrs. Wappinger. She is sure she knows almost exactly where ancestral gold is buried on her place, and in spite of the raucous jeers of her outrageous old parrot, she and Henry stick to their diggings through thick and thin. Towards the end of the summer with no treasure in sight and not much more space to dig, Charlie begins to have his doubts. Then a nearly fatal accident to Mrs. Wappinger brings some astonishing results.

This is an exceedingly funny story, due in part to the lively and well-drawn characters that complicate the plot. The setting is delightful—vacation time on a Maine island

with resort people and natives in conflict or happily compatible. The feud between Charlie and his garbage-collecting older brother is resolved, and everyone is delighted when Mrs. Wappinger finishes up the disagreeable Simpson family. When at the end, Charlie, who is always in the wrong, suddenly finds himself a hero, no one is more surprised than Charlie nor more pleased than his firm friend Mrs. Wappinger. This is a wonderful boy story with delightful pictures in character.

## A

*Tough Enough's Trip.* By Ruth and Latrobe Carroll. Oxford, 1956. \$2.75. (7-10).

It is good to welcome for the third time, Beanie Tatum and his pup, Tough Enough. This time the whole Tatum family is travelling to the sea to visit Great-grandma and Great-grandpa. The truck is over-loaded, what with carrying chairs, the refrigerator, and seven Ta-



tums; so there is no room for pets, not even Tough Enough. Beanie has all he can do to keep back the tears. When Tough Enough is discovered as a stowaway, it is too late to take him back and Beanie is overjoyed. But that's only the beginning of the live-stock. How Beanie and his pup managed to collect a half-starved kitten, a racoon, a de-scented skunk, a talking crow, and a turtle is a story in itself. And how he manages to keep his zoo adds one more laurel leaf to the Tatum's crown. Actu-

ally, Beanie's zoo did the family one good turn on the journey, and as it turned out, Great-grandma and pa liked the creatures. But it is the family love and gentleness, Ma and Pa's good nature and patience that make these heart-warming stories. Ruth Carroll's pictures of the Tatums and their truck, the children and their zoo, the scenery from the Smoky Mountains to the ocean, are as appealing as the story.

## A

*The Corn Grows Ripe.* By Dorothy Rhoads. Illustrated by Jean Charlot. Viking, 1956. \$2.75. (9—).

This is the story of twentieth century Mayan Indians living in Yucatan today much as their ancestors lived. They celebrate the old festivals, make animal sacrifices, and follow ancient customs and beliefs. Twelve-year-old Tigre is considered spoiled and lazy by his grandmother, but when his father is injured, Tigre grows up suddenly and assumes a man's role in the family activities. These center on the raising of the corn on which life depends. The Mayans believe the bush belongs to the



gods, so they only borrow enough land, with the gods' permission, to raise their crop and then they return the land and make a new clearing the following year. Now Tigre must make his clearing alone and his big burn, while he whistles up the wind gods as he

works. He does well, and when at the end of all his hard work grandfather gives Tigre a man's gun, the boy knows he has grown up and the family knows it too. Beautifully written and illustrated with some of Charlot's finest pictures, this book will give children an authentic glimpse of primitive ways and beliefs.

A

*The Magic Pin.* By Ina B. Forbus. Illustrated by Corydon Bell. Viking, 1956. \$2.50. (7-10).

Granpop said Neelie was getting so much like her Granma she should have Granma's little gold horseshoe pin. Neelie loved it at sight, although Aunt Jiminy said she should only wear it on Sundays, Neelie knew she must wear it all the time. It had meant something



special to Granma, and Neelie quickly discovered what that special something was. When she wore the pin she understood what the animals said, and they adopted her as one of them. Louisa the hen was Neelie's special friend and Minty the squirrel and that old mule, Ebenezer. Neelie's deep love for the animals involved her in some dangerous adventures, and the last one almost cost her her life. But it was well worth the risk. The tender relationships of the animals to Neelie, their loyalty to her and complete trust in her good faith, result in some funny and some moving episodes. This tale of magic is so convincingly

related that it seems almost true and altogether delightful.

A

*The Song of Lambert.* By Mazo de la Roche. Illustrated by Eileen Soper. Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1956. \$2.50. (7-11).

It is a surprise to discover that the author of this small, sweet idyl is none other than the



creator of the famous White-oak clan of *Jalna*. Lambert, the lamb, is several jumps and one rosebud removed from red-headed Renny, but Lambert too has charm. He and his twin were feeling frolicsome and a bit naughty one fine day. Then Lambert swallowed a rosebud, looked up at the blue sky and was suddenly so filled with joy that he had to sing, and he did. Bessie, the old horse, said it was the sweetest song she had ever heard, and she took to jumping fences again and even showed the twins a trick or two. But Lambert's mother told him to stop "that silly noise" and butted him hard to emphasize the point. Then Lambert was taken far away, clear to the Antarctic in fact, where he was supposed to furnish lamb chops for Mr. Van Grunt, the millionaire. Fortunately, Lambert did not know this, and he and the millionaire became fast friends. Then one moonlight night, Lambert sang again, and his song affected Mr. Van Grunt just as it had old Bessie the horse. He too started leaping and frolicking with Lambert and feeling altogether wonderful again. The end is a happy one for everyone, with never a mention of lamb chops. Best of all, Lambert is still singing his small, sweet song of joy.

A

### Science

*The Book of Reptiles and Amphibians,* Written



and illustrated by Michael H. Bevans. Garden City, 1956. \$2.50. (9-14).

Illustrations in color of unusual beauty and clarity add distinction to this book which describes over 100 varieties of snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs, toads, and salamanders found in the United States. The introduction contains useful general information on reptiles and amphibians, and the individual descriptions of species include size, characteristics, habits, diet, and habitat. The author achieves a lively and entertaining style in his short texts about each creature, which should give it popular appeal.

C

*Insects and Their World*, By Carroll Lane Fenton and Dorothy Constance Pallas. Illustrated by Carroll Lane Fenton. John Day, 1956. \$2.95. (8-12).

How insects grow, mate, breed, eat, and live in varied environments is described in this useful science book. Each chapter introduces the story of a particular insect, followed by information about other insects with similar or different characteristics. There is a particu-



Horntail

larly valuable chapter on the clothes moth and other household insects. Fine black-and-white drawings and diagrams are to be found on nearly every page. The material is simply written so that much of it could be introduced

by the primary teacher, as well as serving older children.

C

*Exploring Mars*. By Roy A. Gallant. Illustrated by Lowell Hess. Garden City, 1956. \$2.00. (9-14).

Emphasizing that "the telescope and other modern instruments are pitifully inadequate to answer the probing questions that we have about Mars," the author gives an excellent summary of the results of man's observations since the late sixteenth century. He describes great astronomers of the past and the present and their varied theories of Martian origin, topography, and existence of life of any kind. His presentation is impartial and absorbing, and the book is beautifully illustrated with diagrams and pictures in color.

C

*Deserts*. By Delia Goetz, Illustrated by Louis Darling. Morrow, 1956. \$2.00. (8-12).

The Mojave and Sahara deserts are chiefly used to illustrate many of the facts about the hot dry deserts of the world in this absorbing and attractive book. The natural forces which create desert areas, the plant and animal life that survives, as well as man's nomadic desert existence, are described. The part of modern science in improving some of these arid lands gives promise of further reclamation. Attractively illustrated, this book will be useful in social studies as well as in science.

C

*The Golden Book of Science*. By Bertha Morris Parker. Illustrated by Harry McNaught. Simon and Schuster, 1956. \$3.95. (8-11).

Bertha Morris Parker's newest book is an introduction to a wide range of science subjects which should stimulate children's interest to further and more detailed reading on subjects that rouse their interest. Beginning with such topics as *How Old is Old*, *How Big is Big*, the book describes a variety of plant, animal, and insect types, the human body and its care, astronomy, weather, modern scientific achieve-

ments, and simple physics. All in all, some sixty topics are presented in simple direct style so that much of the material can be used, with primary children, and can be read by fourth and fifth graders. Bright color illustrations give added picture appeal to the book, which is well indexed.

C

*The True Book of More Science Experiments.*

By Illa Podendorf. Illustrated by Chauncey Maltman. Children's Press, 1956. \$2.00. (6-8).

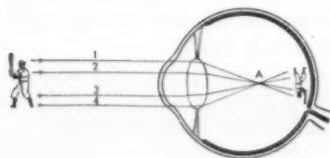
Teachers who have found the previously published *True Book of Science Experiments* helpful will welcome this second book which



serves to introduce basic scientific principles, and which can be read by primary children. The experiments in the new title are related to light, work, inertia, and ice, water, water vapor. Colorful pictures supplement the text in describing experiments.

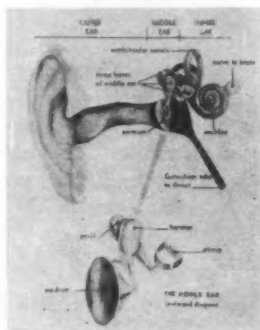
C

*You and Your Senses.* By Lee Schneider. Illustrated by Gustav Schrotter. Harcourt Brace, 1956. \$2.75. (11-15).



*Our Senses and How They Work.* By Herbert S. Zim. Illustrated by Herschel Wartik, 1956. \$2.00. (9-12).

Here are two excellent books which survey the same general material, but meet the needs of different age ranges. The Zim book for younger readers contains sixty-four pages of large print text and numerous illustrations. It



covers the five senses, including such sensations as pain, hunger, and thirst, and touches very briefly on the brain and nervous system. The Schneider title for upper elementary and junior high use is more detailed, contains more experiments, and a fuller treatment of the brain and nervous system. It, too, is well illustrated and contains an index. Both books are valuable and much needed additions on the subjects.

C

*Magic Bullets.* By Louis Sutherland. Illustrated by E. Harper Johnson. Little Brown, 1956. \$3.00. (11-15).

Magic bullets are the modern discoveries which help overcome germ diseases. The author gives a fascinating account of progress in combatting disease from the invention of the microscope to the achievements in antibiotics in the last two decades. The magnitude of this accomplishment becomes even more impressive when viewed in the light of past epidemics which nearly destroyed whole nations. Mr. Sutherland is a microbiologist in a New York



hospital, and he writes authoritatively and entertainingly on his subject. The book contains a pronouncing guide, an index, and a good bibliography of other titles in the field of medicine for younger readers.

C

*Bernadette and the Lady.* By Hertha Pauli, Illustrated by Georges Vaux. Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1956. \$1.95. (11-15).

Here is a book of unusual distinction which will have particular appeal for parochial school readers. It is the story of Bernadette Soubirous, the girl of Massabielle, whose vision and its



aftermath inspired the world famous shrine at Lourdes. The book is beautifully and reverently written, and it is one of the finest titles that has appeared in the Vision Book series.

C

*Goya.* By Elizabeth Ripley. With drawings, etchings and paintings by Goya. Oxford University Press, 1956. \$3.00. (10-16).

Elizabeth Ripley has made an eminent contribution in a field none too extensively treated in the area of children's literature, the field of art biography. With four past titles to her credit, *Rembrandt*, *Vincent Van Gogh*, *Michelangelo*, and *Leonardo Da Vinci*, her latest one, *Goya*, maintains the same high standard as the others.



Francisco Goya, the Spanish painter, was fortunate in having a father who appreciated his son's talent and financed his study of painting. Because of his great gifts, Goya's rise was rapid, and he became court painter for Spain. The Napoleonic invasion of his country was a matter of deep sorrow to him, and many of his paintings depict the warlike scenes and tragic fighting of that time. The return of the despotic Spanish king at last caused him to turn from his homeland, and he died in France.

Reproductions of Goya's paintings face each page of text, arranged chronologically with the biography. Though the pictures are not in color, the character and vitality of his work show very clearly.

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